

THE  
INDIVIDUAL  
AND  
REALITY

E. D. Fawcett

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# **The Individual and Reality**



# The Individual and Reality

An Essay touching the First Principles  
of Metaphysics

By  
Edward Douglas Fawcett



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GENERAL

"I hail your book as a great and  
powerful agency in the spreading of  
truth."

Professor WILLIAM JAMES.



## Preface

THIS work is not a continuation of my *Riddle* (1893), but supersedes it. I do not regret having penned the latter. Read with "enormous satisfaction" by a critic such as Professor William James, it was evidently not written in vain. Some of its novelties are to reappear, in fact, here. But my abandonment of the *Monadology* and considerable advances in other directions furnish reason that I should start afresh.

Those who followed the *Monadology* with interest may care to learn that I made every effort to save it, but found the task impracticable. After a pause of some fifteen years, I have replaced it with the new form of Idealism which is presented here. The Monads—even the time-honoured human "egos"—disappear.

The work is just an essay on some disputed first principles of metaphysics, and has no pretensions to be called a treatise. Its main aim is to indicate the foundations on which the metaphysics of the future may be built. The riddle before us is that as to the general nature of Reality at large—of the universe. And the solution offered may be regarded as an alternative to that reached by Bradley, also an idealist, in his famous *Appearance and Reality*: a work which I have had continually in mind. Absolutism in its German, English, and Indian<sup>1</sup> forms is rejected

<sup>1</sup> "Nothing genuinely real can move" [change] is the formula of this standpoint. The old Brahmanic hypothesis of the changeless Universal Self is defended very interestingly, and with a warm appreciation of Fichte, by Mr Bhagavân Dâs in his *Science of Peace* (Theosophical Publishing Society, 1904).

outright. We are to regard Being as Becoming, and dispensing with a mythological Ultimate, which is held to be complete, perfect, and above time, to sight a fundamental unrest and imperfection in the heart of things. I do not claim that my solutions are all fully satisfactory. What I do urge, however, is that the method adopted serves to validate at any rate *some* very important metaphysical truths: truths which have as good a claim to rank as knowledge as any collection of propositions labelled "science." Reality is by no means veiled. Look at it steadily and strenuously, and you will detect many of the features which are emphasised here. There is no knowledge above appearances, and to appearances the radical empiricist is thoroughly content to go.

I owe, perhaps, an explanation to dwellers in the tents of "psychical research," mysticism, theosophy, etc., some of whom may complain that I make too little of "facts" which they hold to be of great interest and worth. Metaphysics, however, let me point out, has no special connection with "psychical research"; *e.g.*, a descriptive account of the "planes" open to super-normal experience would leave all the fundamental riddles of metaphysics still on our hands (Part I. Chap. I. § 5, and elsewhere). And, of course, metaphysics must rethink only approved experience, not alleged facts touching the reality of which there are violent disputes. In other words, it must take the world *as it comes to the ordinary philosophical student and the plain man*—discuss only such appearances as all sane workaday folk agree to admit. This consideration seems capital. Accordingly, raids into the "Borderland," etc., will be avoided. Arguing from a limited basis of fact, we shall strive to



obtain some clue to that *general nature*, in respect of which all phases of Reality may be conceived, perhaps, to agree. The definition and province of Metaphysics are dealt with in the opening chapter. Germany, not India, seems the hierophant.

The greater portion of the work concerns not mysticism, but issues familiar to all students who are in earnest with philosophy. Chaps. IV. and V. of Part III., however, will have a special interest for our modern mystics, dealing as they do with the topics of "Death," "Birth," the "Plurality of Lives," etc. I have endeavoured to throw fresh light on the discussion of the "Plurality of Lives," have shown, I trust, in what respects current hypotheses, "theosophical" and other, are at fault, and, incidentally, have urged that a "religio-ethical device," such as the doctrine of "Karma," can have no standing in serious philosophy. A cosmic "law" of "Justice" is assumed quite uncritically both by many neo-Christian mystics and by those neo-theosophists who attach special worth to Indian metaphysics. Enough if I have succeeded merely in indicating in what quarter more adequate explanation may lie.

Most of this essay was written in a high-lying chalet on a Swiss mountain-side. Having only my notes and a poor show of books of reference at command, I have, doubtless, been guilty of occasional errors in the detail of quotations and so forth. Needless to say, I shall be glad to hear of any corrections which the competent reader can suggest.

Holding no form of Faith and being independent of any existing school of Philosophy or mysticism, Eastern or Western, I have been free to ignore all

traditions and conventions and go straight to Reality in the search for truth. The essay has been described, wrongly to my thinking, as a "handbook of philosophical nihilism." The nihilism, however, is such that it gives promise of the most complete *practical satisfactions* for which any sentient, who does not cry out for the moon, could hope. The individual is displayed as the most important fact of Reality. And, touching Reality as a whole, a result of singular interest is reached. Metaphysics, it would seem, must found on idealistic atheism, but the history of creation, withal, presents itself as not improbably the history of the Evolution of God.

CHÂLET LE CLÔT,  
CHÂTEAU D'OEX, 1908.

*Later.*—An able correspondent, to whom I sent a conspectus of the contents of this essay, has asked me if I have hopped on the works of Prof. Bergson, whose results seem in part to agree with mine. Unfortunately, I have not. The fragmentary knowledge I have of that thinker's views is drawn from Dr James's book, *A Pluralistic Universe*, which was sent to me, very courteously, by its author in May 1909. The headwaters of my thinking lie in the anti-Hegelian thought of Schelling and Schopenhauer and the literature of the British-American empiricist school. The full stream joins tributaries such as Schelling's theory of the "Immemorial Being" and Bain's doctrine of Relativity. The rejection of the "law" of Contradiction flows from this Relativity doctrine when once completely understood.

CHAMONIX, June 1909.



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# The Individual and Reality

## Part I

### CHAPTER I

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS

#### METAPHYSICS: HOW DEFINED—A MAKESHIFT AT BEST

§ 1. THE object of philosophical thinking, as theoretical interest, is "truth." And the branch of philosophy named Metaphysics strives, accordingly, after its particular kind of truth—truth about the *general* nature or meaning of Appearance.<sup>1</sup> It is a search for first principles and as such concerns not this or that order of Appearance, but all orders, normal and supernormal alike, grasped somehow, if very abstractly, as a whole. Its problem is the Riddle of the Universe. And I will assert at once that both the complete statement and the complete solution of this riddle will be lacking. The statement will be defective, since we do not know all appearances. And the

<sup>1</sup> "Metaphysics," says Bradley, "is an attempt to know Reality as against mere appearances." But appearances that are not real are, as we shall see, mythical. I use "appearances" throughout simply in place of the ugly word "phenomena," and with no leaning towards the view that the said appearances are possibly unreal.

solution will be defective, not only as relative to this statement, but as a result reached by way of *thinking*. Thought moves blithely towards the complete absorption of its object. But, in the event, it is revealed as a phase only of the Appearance which it had hoped to seize. The larger portion of our knowledge being mediate, we regard the "rational," "intelligible," and "thought-out" with becoming respect. And we invest a system of the "rational" with something like pomp. But all systems which express truth are abstract, and, to be abstract—save from an intellectual point of view—is defect. There is a flaw in the nature of philosophical thinking. Rationalism tries to stand for, or close with, that which is fuller and richer than itself.

#### METAPHYSICS HOLDS NO BRIEF FOR OPTIMISM

"We never judge except to satisfy an interest."<sup>1</sup> But most of us come to metaphysics with interests narrower than the general nature of the inquiry warrants. Men, tired of confusion, want to harmonise conflicting aspects of science; other folk seek to examine, and, if possible, uphold beliefs inherited from faith; others, again, freed from dogma, are aglow with the "burning" problems of evil or the destiny of the individual; others, yet again, still unrest born of studies which barely stir the pulse. Men of different temperaments and lives respond naturally to different promptings. But it matters not what brings us to metaphysics. Anon, putting aside or subordinating the private and personal, we have to prepare to look steadily at the wider view. And we note, accordingly, that the inquiry is not designed to feed ardent hopes. The satisfaction that

<sup>1</sup> Bosanquet.



accrues may be that only which crowns work doggedly and honestly done. Metaphysics, in short, holds no brief for optimism. Emotional, perhaps, ourselves, we have to abide by what, in the main, we find. We are standing, by arrangement, at the intellectual or rational view-point. And this means that we are to work with intent to attain the widest and most comprehensive grasp of appearances. The pleasantness or unpleasantness of what is caught in thought's net does not matter. What does matter is that the net should be cast round all appearances that subserve our purpose. This ideal of wide thinking is not obligatory. It is best to regard it as the privilege of the competent and virile. Weaklings may denounce it, but the fact moves us only to laughter. There are folk who, like Clavius, resent seeing the satellites of Jupiter; their resource is, not to decry astronomy, but to refuse to look through a telescope.

#### WIDE THINKING MERELY "OUR" INTEREST

§ 2. Width of view, then, come what may, is our interest. Our results may serve to cheer. But they may, perhaps, depress, nay, demoralise, and the possibility leaves us unmoved. There are truths that, for many, are hurtful; and, again, there are helpful statements which are assuredly not truths. Such situations are instructive; and incidentally our inquiry may take note of them anon. But the inquiry itself is general, and its end has been clearly enounced. In pursuance of this end we seize all *relevant* aspects of experience and drop others. Aspects for which we have no use fall to other stand-points, *e.g.* to the theoretic sciences, which are all concerned with general, if less wide, thinking. Note,

further, that as rationalists we are "severe" thinkers, treating the emotional as an influence which may corrupt thought. And this, in view of our purpose, is necessary. But we must avoid the mistake that rationalism is alone of account—that progress, for instance, depends solely on the betterment of "severe" thinking. The stream of sentient life flows wide and full, and to gaze only on one current of it invites trouble. The barely rational has never yet ruled the world. The sentimental, the emotional, and the passionate, mark forces which it were fatuous to underrate or ignore. Consider merely the realm of religion or faith. From the emotional as dominant in faith sprout miracles of action throughout history. Do we hap upon wild faiths at times? Often, no doubt; but varied forces, as well wild as gentle, concur in movement. If the faiths go to the making of character, or institutions, or, again, to the doing of historic work, what then? A demiurge, at least, might look on and call the faiths good. Are not the narrow and subjective often of great price? Surely so, if men have to *make*, and *be made*, as well as think. Dreams, idle for philosophy, but ensouled with glowing passion, shake the world. Perhaps the most potent figures in history have been persons who never lived. And the popular religions thrive, not because they teach true metaphysics or true astronomy or true biology, or even always good history or morality, but because they body forth the emotions, lessening distress, kindling hope, vitalising action, and furthering race success in the struggle of life. Their gods exist only in people's heads; respond to what Zola in *Lourdes*, has well called the "need of the lie." Their worth, in the main, is practical. As practical forces they may even oppose rationalism, and none the less be

justified by their results. Religion at times may stand higher than philosophical truth. All the great faiths have, or have had, their uses ; but all, I must add, come to outlive them. They die hard, and, unfortunately, their corpses are slow to decay. A religion which helps to prompt world-historic movements, ethical, social, and political, which consoles, moralises, and contents honest adherents, is a working force which properly exacts respect. Cosmic interests do not lie wholly within the pale of thinking. On the other hand, a creed which warps intellect while conferring no countervailing benefits has no claim to sanctity, but should be treated as one of the plagues which afflict mankind.

#### THE FAITH-WORLDS ARE REAL AND IMPORTANT

§ 3. The emotional bulks largely in faith. But no man is barely emotional ; emotions being abstractions which have place only in the inventories of the science of mind. Along with his joys and fears goes a more or less definite imaginary world. And faith's world is inward experience that seems, and *within itself* most assuredly is, real. All appearances, *as well inner as outer*, are, as we shall see, real, and this kind has such immediacy and glowing concreteness that to ignore it were altogether vain.<sup>1</sup> We are to accept, then, and emphasise, the reality of this subjective world. And we observe that the import-

<sup>1</sup> "The facts of Christian experience are as truly facts and as open to scientific observation and verification as any other phenomena of life and thought. What right have agnostics to ignore them if they really desire to know all that can be known ? . . . My mind and consciousness have been flooded with a joy and peace which are as real as any other conscious experience—far more real than most—and more calculated to render life worth living than any" (Letter of a writer in the *Daily Telegraph* controversy on Faith). Religionists of other faiths have, of course, like experiences.



ance of such worlds, when penetrating or fusing with *other spheres of reality*, may be immense. Some groups of these worlds make for evil, but most, on the whole, it would seem, for good. The armies of the enlightened acclaim Reason, and there have been revolutionists who made themselves a goddess rejoicing in this august name. But there is a time for all things, even for goddesses; and rest assured that this goddess has not helped mankind over every stile. When the due season has come, Reason will assert herself right gloriously. Her fires are always burning on some altars. In most affairs, even among savages, the dream-worlds are controlled by practical needs. One *must* step out of a palace if no bread comes to the door. And the habit of rationality, which yields common sense and, anon, that ordered common sense called science, is aggressive. The faith-worlds fall slowly under its influence. A faith-world is unstable, but it is not to be disrupted from within. While subjectively real, a creation for subjective peace, it belongs, *also*, to a being who is fuller and richer than itself; and the main stream of appearances flowing through this being erodes it. Whence come these fresh appearances? From a somewhat that is making the being ever more adequate to itself? Peradventure; but at this point we broach an issue which will properly concern us anon.

#### FAITH MISTAKES INWARD REALITY FOR REALITY OF A WIDER SORT

These subjective worlds vary much in character. Imaginative folk may revel in a faith paradise of concrete worth. Others own what, in an imaginative regard, is a realm of shades; imagery being feeble,

and words largely supplanting ideas. A joy and peace passing understanding may cling, it would seem, to mere words. Again, some of these worlds are very strictly preserved; others blend partly with the appearances that make up the WIDER REAL. Sometimes the subjective world is enjoyed as a thing apart, a thing which may be fearful and wonderful indeed. The faith-world of a lama or fakir nears madness, and some celebrities in Christian story are in like case. Thus we have the famous ecstasies or mystics whose world was "erotomania with the idea of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or God as respondent"—the confessions of these dreamers being decisive.<sup>1</sup> Ordinarily, however, the faith-world is controlled by pressure from without. It has its peculiar sphere, but is modified, withal, imperceptibly as circumstances dictate. The plain man tries to preserve his faith unimpaired. But under normal conditions the faith-worlds come inevitably to collide with fact. Faith tends to mistake *inward* reality for reality of another sort. Its subjectivism, however, is not the universe. And this subjectivism, extruding itself, as in the end it must, beyond its sphere, weathers badly. A faith like Christianity seems to defy time just because it preserves its *name*. But its primitive significance is always being altered; it is continually dying in order that it may live. All faiths which unite folk have dogmas, and these dogmas come to conflict with robust science and metaphysics. The creed, leaving its fastness, is attacked on a field held by rationalism. The story of compromise, concession, and adaptation is the sequel. The reconcilers, the symbologists, and the masters of "esoterics" wax

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. H. Leuba, "On the Psychology of a Group of Christian Mystics," *Mind*, January 1905.

numerous.<sup>1</sup> We note *religious metaphysics*, wherein faith sways thinking, and anon *metaphysical religion*, wherein thinking, still tinged, however, with subjectivism, comes to dominate. The phases of this struggle must be watched in the race-history rather than in individuals. The individual, indeed, is apt to greet rationalism with curses. What is the WIDER REAL to him? To sink back out of storms into faith—this is a resource of which men are not easily dispossessed. And we who avow rationalism, are we quite sure that we want it in seriousness all along the line? Have we no tender interest, no sheltered blossom of tradition, that we mean to safeguard? Passions are stout warders of the faith-worlds; they further that persistence in consciousness which conditions belief. And the man possessed by a faith will never make a good metaphysician. He will bask in special appearances, though as metaphysician he ought to see things together (*συνοπτικός*) and sweep them comprehensively into his mental net. He will *say*, no doubt, that he is not led by passion. To believe that God is love; that the individual soul is immortal; that this is the best of all possible worlds; that everything that is is right; that apparent evil is always lost in ultimate good—to pass these and like statements just because, while harbouring them, he has glowing emotions, is idle. But it is one thing to make this admission in the abstract, and another thing, and a difficult one, to hold to it strenuously throughout storm and stress. And, sentinel his procedure as he may, the man of faith will probably

<sup>1</sup> Later generations are prone to treat even the rudest myths as allegory. A notable example is the transformation of the crude myth of Dionysus and his second birth by the Orphic religious reformation.



stray wide of truth. In Metaphysics, at least, the cold temperament is an advantage not to be despised.

#### THE PREJUDICES OF METAPHYSICIANS

§ 4. In practice, of course, there is no heaven-born sage, and assuredly no metaphysician, religious or other, without his bias. Right thinking flows ordinarily from a struggle in which waste, errors, irrelevancies, and even absurdities bulk largely. Were the most luminous soul laid bare to our vision, its psychology would probably appal. And in this turmoil which sires Thought, the emotions and the will inevitably play their parts. When, therefore, philosophers acclaim a Master, review not only what this sage says, but, to some extent, also, the influences which push him to say it. What irrelevant interests, practical or theoretical, are likely to cloud his thinking? Is he a free man—free from the need of softening generalisations or reconciling, in some fearful and wonderful way, the new with the old? Are his worldly prospects and hope of repute likely to warp his judgment? Has he had an early training which might clothe some special religion or doctrine with charm? Has he spent years in mastering the literature of some particular school of thought?<sup>1</sup> Take careful note of his temperament, for his philosophy will, in part, flow from his character. Kant's character shows clear in the *Practical Reason*. We observe the fiery and energetic Fichte in the

<sup>1</sup> Such specialism, which involves the very personality of the man, will assert itself against refutation to the last. The impulse of self-conservation tends to oust rationalism. It will be noted that the champions of philosophical schools rarely, if ever, admit a signal defeat; only the onlooker seems to derive benefit from their conflicts. Who wants to go to school over again?

*Science of Knowledge*, and Schopenhauer incarnate in the *World as Will and Idea*.

#### METAPHYSICS TAKES, NEVER MAKES, APPEARANCES

§ 5. It goes without saying that Metaphysics must not dictate (as at times it has ventured to do) *a priori* science to astronomers, physicists, and biologists. It takes, never makes, the appearances of which it treats. It must not pen geographies of "unseen worlds," describe Hades, nor follow in creative vein the fortunes of posthumous mankind. It re-thinks, in fine, a subject-matter which it does not provide. Its scope will embrace the supernormal—when the latter is established as fact. But the "supernormal," nay, other-world lore in general, has no special claims on our notice. I am not concerned now to inquire whether evidence of the "supernormal" exists.<sup>1</sup> I note simply that Metaphysics is receptive of relevant facts. And facts of this kind are as welcome as aught else. A policy of exclusion, to save, perhaps, some gaunt theory or system, were folly.

#### IT HAS NO SPECIAL CONCERN WITH "PSYCHICAL RESEARCH"

But it is easy and, indeed, usual to overrate the importance of such facts. There is a certain kind of Magus whom we know, alas! only too well. He is an authority on worlds that are "unseen"—and on these only! And he conceives that talk about such worlds is the concern of metaphysics properly so called. His mistake, while an elementary one, merits, withal, passing notice. The reply to this trifle is obvious. "A *veritable* discovery of such worlds would, of

<sup>1</sup> It does, of course, and in plenty, as all keen and obstinate inquirers will sooner or later find out.





course, widen the outlook of us all. But in noting new appearances we do but *enlarge the statement* of the old riddle. To complicate a problem is not quite the same thing as to solve it. The seer at his best would only pave the way for the metaphysician. We concede that the universe may contain numberless strata of Reality, numberless types of organisms, and numberless modes of conscious life. And we are prepared to accept any such strata, etc., which evidences attest. But Metaphysics, we must repeat, concerns the *general import of Reality*: not the discussion of events or features of some novel phase of it, however interesting, viewed in a psychological or other scientific regard, that particular phase may be." The Magus, like all "popular" thinkers, has to learn what the fundamental problems of metaphysics really are. Full awareness of these difficulties is almost a triumph. And the triumph must be mediated by way of a grasp of the history of philosophy.

#### METAPHYSICS AND THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

§ 6. Metaphysics cannot dispense with the history of philosophy. We have there an effective display of the points of view taken up at different stages of civilisation. We note the grave difficulties of our problem, and also the many attempts, successful and other, that have been made to solve them. This portion of the history of mankind fills an important realm of Appearance. The succession of attitudes is itself of extreme interest. And, knowing something of the succession, we shall find that we too may be enabled to make some useful additions to knowledge. Originality, perhaps, will sprout from indebtedness. Metaphysics is child of a long struggle, of most stages

of which we shall do well to take account. Still, Philosophy, which includes Metaphysics, is not the history of philosophy. Thus the development of Western thought from Thales to Hegel is not to be taken as the only way by which Reason could rise to higher eminences. Had the economic and social, etc., conditions of the long interval been different, nay, had Plato and Aristotle died young, the stream of Western thought might have flowed in channels of which Erdmann and the historians know nothing. There are many broad avenues of approach to Reason's temple. On the other hand, outside Western thought, there is not, as yet, much of value to rationalism. The ablest of the Indian metaphysical "systems"—if system it can be called—appeals mainly to mystics and religionists.<sup>1</sup> In the Vedānta, to which I allude, the dissociation of the religious and metaphysical interests is imperfect. The theocratic past lies heavily on the thinker, and the "system," while suggestive, lags far behind the methodical inquiries of the West.

#### ILLUMINISM

§ 7. Some mystics, of course, have looked coldly on the history of philosophy, appealing to an illuminism which renders such toil superfluous. Illuminism, properly so called, is not Faith. It professes, like rationalism, to confront the appearances of which it treats. Further, it is not to be viewed as mere seer-ship. A seer, or "psychic," is not necessarily of high intelligence; he may resemble an infant who con-

<sup>1</sup> The high-water mark of classical Indian metaphysics is, perhaps, attained in the *Vedānta Sūtras* and the commentary thereon of Sankara, and for this cf. *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxiv. Those who are told that metaphysical wisdom flows solely from the East are referred to the Sūtras and their commentator.

fronts a sense-world of which he understands little. Illuminism might concur with advanced seership. On the other hand, it might characterise the reflections of an ordinary man. It might shine, not through supplemented sense, but through better thinking, yielding "principles" which make "intelligible" the experience of *normal* mankind. How fares it, then, when interpreting appearances which are familiar to us all? Well, the best metaphysics has been penned by those who never claimed to be illuminists at all. For the moment the reply seems decisive, but on reflection we shall conclude that the issue has been in no way disposed of.

#### ILLUMINISM AND ORDINARY GENERALISATION

A genuine Illuminism, that is to say an intuitive or "perceptive understanding," having the immediacy and directness of sense, is possible. We are at no loss to figure what we mean by it. There are familiar experiences which combine the features of sense and thought.<sup>1</sup> But is it asked how Illuminism could sire rational "principles"? The reply is—by *feeling* that on which the "principles," as abstract propositions, have to ground. There is nothing mysterious in abstract principles. There are no principles superior to and above feeling. Principles, when true, ground on agreements or "identities" between appearances which, as a vague whole, we already know. The mother-stuff of this vague whole is feeling. The generalising process, the entire edifice of "induction," rests on feeling, and Illuminism, if

<sup>1</sup> I have instanced elsewhere the "meditative perception" of a landscape; the rich "wholeness" of detail being present along with a pervasive *feeling* which, abstracted and expressed in words, we term the theory or thought of idealism.



it supplies anything, supplies only what ordinary generalisation or induction *might* yield. It reveals no supersensible relations: nothing save agreements or "identities" in the felt. But it must be added that it reveals them in its particular way—not isolatedly and abstractly, but swathed more or less in concrete, nay, emotional feeling. In Illuminism sense and thought lose their hard outlines, melting, as it were, into the mother-stuff from which both, perhaps, slowly arose.

#### HENCE A WORKING UNION OF ILLUMINISM AND RATIONALISM IS FEASIBLE

A full-blown Illuminism might unfit an individual for discursive reasoning, and even a partial Illuminism might well fail to justify itself to philosophy. It might be discredited by sheer incompetence to construct on methodical lines. Its embodiment in language might exasperate; its modes of exposition, of mediation between "whole" and "parts," suggest chaos. On the other hand, its deliverances, once checked and verified, might properly take rank with Inductive Truths—might be transformed from flashes of insight into *principles*. A working union of Illuminism and Rationalism is thus feasible. And Illuminism, if it has ever helped metaphysics, has probably done best in connection with systems which, professedly, are not illuminist at all. It is observed by Schopenhauer that "a hidden illuminism may lie at the basis of rationalism"; and I may add that one germinal intuition—one directly felt agreement grounding a principle—might prompt the building of an entire metaphysical system.<sup>1</sup> But, however

<sup>1</sup> Illuminism suggests the question of genius. Bain notes two classes of genius. The generalising genius of whom we are

sound the intuitions, Rationalism is the language in which the social human, as we know him, must be addressed. The "flash" and the "genial glance" effect little; a system with interdependent and clearly interrelated parts is essential. And there must be no ignoring of history. The man who builds "his" system regardless of the entire past builds badly. He who wishes to be thorough must see problems from all sides, and learn by study that it is futile to solve the world-riddle till one has power to state it. Knowledge of history is the best antidote to that one-sidedness that threatens us all. It reveals the limitations of outlook from which even the most acute thinker must start, guiding him through disillusionments to something like breadth of view. It shows him that the individual, as such, is incompetent, that metaphysics is a social product, and that the present is lit by the successes, failures, and contradictions of the main philosophical past.

#### WHY SHOULD WE DISCUSS METAPHYSICS AT ALL?

§ 8. The worth of our study has been slighted: Shall I reply that utility is relative to needs, and that the inquiry answers to a widely felt and insistent

speaking might represent one class; the poet, the other. The generalising genius—the illuminist of Science—is met with in men like Faraday, of whom Helmholtz wonderingly remarks: "It is in the highest degree astonishing to see what a large number of general theorems, the mathematical deduction of which requires the highest powers of mathematical analysis, he formed by a *kind of intuition, with the security of instinct*, without the help of a single mathematical formula" (cited by W. C. D. Whetham, F.R.S., *Recent Development of Physical Science*, p. 197). Tyndall himself (*Fragments of Science*) alludes to inductions which manifest "*a kind of spiritual inspiration*"—a remarkable admission on the part of the author of the famous *Belfast Address*.

want? The thinker has his bent, and asks no man's leave to follow it. Enough, then, apparently has been said. But I must add that this want is vastly more general and urgent than objectors allow. Even reasoning (in which objectors indulge at times), presents riddles that give us pause. "It is impossible to free logic from doubt and difficulty until metaphysics first has cleared up its own difficulties."<sup>1</sup> And, as regards other sciences—well, mathematics, psychology, biology, chemistry, physics, etc., leave a wealth of non-departmental problems unsolved. It is not for them, indeed, to go further—sufficient for the department are the working principles thereof. Officially, metaphysics is ignored — is sometimes, indeed, mentioned with contempt. Nevertheless, we sight trespassers in our domain; savants being forced on to such ground while too ashamed, perhaps, or too confused, to admit the fact. There are metaphysical flights in plenty, and the needs which prompt these adventures must be adjudged grave. Turning to another quarter, we observe that religion has interests at stake. An advanced faith has its intellectual side. It has theologians who espouse a theory of Appearance, and defend it, on partly intellectual lines, against the world. What cannot, in the face of criticism, be buttressed by faith must be upheld, if at all, by way of metaphysics. But waiving this point of utility, we may say of metaphysics that those who lack appetite are not invited to partake of the repast. Is it urged by the agnostic that the repast cannot be served? The most effective rejoinder is to proceed forthwith to lay the table.

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Principles of Logic*, p. 499.



## CHAPTER II

### AN INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS (*continued*)

#### MAN A NATURAL METAPHYSICIAN

§ 1. WE have decided, then, to pursue metaphysics. An interest lies that way and directs thinking. We have a liking, and, being free men, we indulge in it. But we observe in passing that the practice of mankind supports us; impulses, unmastered and unmasterable, driving folk steadily this way. "The only mere physicists are the animals; they alone do not think."<sup>1</sup> The desire to explain, to see things more or less together, is insistent. Of a verity, metaphysics is decried by common sense; such sense is, well—common—while the power to think doggedly, strenuously, and widely is somewhat rare. But the plain man who reviles us has his private metaphysical views, and these views, if we but press him, will be found to be both numerous and strong. He comes to scoff, but has, perforce, to remain to think. His beliefs are, no doubt, crude; still, if he talks at all, he shapes a theory, says something as to what appearances are or attest. He is pushed into doing what in words he loudly condemns. And this *unconscious metaphysics* plays a part even in Science. Most daring work has come from this quarter; the theories as to the

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, Wallace's translation, p. 157.

"ultimate" nature of "matter" being in point.<sup>1</sup> In Philosophy, again, an unconscious metaphysics has gone so far as to attack metaphysics itself; materialists such as Büchner and Vogt hurling "Force" and "Matter" at the wastrels who tread our path. Man is a natural metaphysician, but ordinarily, we must say, a blind and a bad one. Still, to be a blind or naive metaphysician is better than not to be a metaphysician at all. Indifferentism alone forbids progress. It remains to point out to these folk what they are doing, and to suggest, if we can, a more satisfactory way of doing it.

#### AGNOSTICISM

§ 2. A word as to the agnostics. These critics, too, as a rule, are metaphysicians. Thus the Spencerian who proclaims an "Unknowable" (raising the veil ever more and more during the process) need not delay us. He has his theory of appearances, inclining to place an occult Reality somehow behind these. This Ultimate becomes less and less mysterious as the exposition proceeds.<sup>2</sup> Agnosticism of this kind forms a positive, albeit sketchy, metaphysics. The agnostic proper, or *phenomenalist*, is less obviously committed. Appearances, he says, appear, but do not carry us at all beyond, or behind, them. Our interests, he adds, lie in appearances, not in veiled Reality at the Back of Beyond. We reply that no sane metaphysics wants the Back of Beyond. If we are to think, we must think about, and in terms of, appearances. Sentient

<sup>1</sup> That these theories moot "representative fictions" is the view, not of the theorists, but of some of their philosophical critics. And, of course, it was not "fictions" that materialism sought to impose upon modern thought.

<sup>2</sup> For some remarks on the amusingly gnostic side of Spencer, cf. my *Riddle of the Universe*, pp. 206-7 *et seq.*



experience is our all, and it remains only to make the most of it. But we must pass on to inquire *what the appearances really comprise*. What if, regarded closely, they include much which the agnostic denies or doubts? What if they provide the stuff of which reasonable metaphysics is made?

"A Hair, perhaps, divides the False and True.

Yes! and a single Alif were the clue—

Could you but find it—to the Treasure-house,

And, peradventure, to the Master, too!"

Of course, some phenomenologists assert bluntly that appearances are empty—that they comprise nothing which indicates what the ultimate character of Reality may be. But dogmatism of this sort must not be taken too seriously. The more enlightened phenomenologist refuses to commit himself once and for all. He inclines, perhaps, to regard us metaphysicians as fools. Nevertheless, he remains the man of open mind, who will hear evidence. We have, of course, no quarrel with this veteran critic. Happily for rationalism, he has long been with us, a salutary check on the babbling that fools mankind. He looks askance at constructive metaphysics. Agreed. But this is because he has seen so much wreckage cast up by the centuries. The scandals of speculative thinking, the enormities perpetrated by men drunk with words, bulk largely in the history of philosophy. Hence, in sifting new views, he invariably asks, "What *appearances* answer to the *propositions* which I am asked to admit?" By pressing this simple point, he undoes creed on creed, system on system, hopeful of convincing the world that metaphysical thinking is waste of time. His insistence on appearances is welcome: abstract thinking is a makeshift and, divorced from sentient experience, becomes verbal.

But to refer us to appearances is one thing; to suggest that appearances are probably empty is another. Let the veteran critic take heed. We shall show that from *appearances in sentient experience* a metaphysics not unworthy of his attention can be constructed.

### ON METHOD AND TRUTH

§ 3. Method is explicit formulation of the way or manner in which we are to seek "Truth"—the general kind of "Truth" wanted in metaphysics. What, again, is "Truth," or, to ignore this abstraction, the common quality which we discern, or think we discern, in calling certain propositions or statements "true"? Finding the adjective in common use, we might opine that men agree as to its meaning. No such agreement, however, exists. A quality which appeals somehow to common sense rises vaguely into the reflective consciousness. There are even thinkers who have relinquished the inquiry in despair. In considering the claims of Method, we shall have to frame some concept of the true, whither Method leads.

### THE RISE OF METHOD

§ 4. The primitive philosophical thinker reckons nought of Method. Thinking has to precede reflection on the way in which thinking is done. As the naive world-theories multiply, men note that they also conflict. Is thinking, then, *merely* subjective—a source of opinions which cannot command general assent? Or is it that the ways in which folk think are faulty? Many of the enlightened will drift to scepticism, acquiescing in anarchy wherein minds flower as they list. *Theory* is to leave this or that

man the measure of things! But, anon, the needs of *practice* impel a move. If this and that man think as seemeth them good, then, perchance, grave risks, moral, political, and social, will arise. And so the pressure worsens till it forces some virile individual to act. This man reasserts general truth, but is found to observe a certain procedure in doing so. We sight a Socrates. Ionics, Pythagoreans, Eleatics, Heracleitus, and the rest have had their say. Contradictions and conflicts have waxed plentiful. "Subjectivity" rears its warring heads, and there arises that much-abused, but, on the whole, useful person, the sophist. Well—we know what the Socratic campaign effected. The phase relevant here is the constructive use of Method. And this use, again, answers to the pressure of need, the finding of a base for morality. The particular method used was not formulated as such, being only embodied *practically* in the uniform way in which Socrates worked. Dawn, of course, had to precede day. Later and wider needs have forced the various explicit methods into being. With the flow of the centuries many and striking devices have been mooted, but a method satisfactory to all workers is, as is notorious, still very far to seek. There has been no "logical" development; retrogression has been frequent, and innovators have often strayed into blind alleys. In fine, in the emergence of methods, as of all else, we discern nothing that suggests an all-rational cosmos. Trial and error, a struggle to persist between devices good, bad, and indifferent—between "variations" happening in perplexed and harried minds—this is the hard and seemingly so wasteful process. There is no logical fate which slowly but surely unfolds the perfect method from the seed. A restless virility, the abounding energy of men strong enough to respond to



wants, is the essential. Failing this energy and these wants, there is no movement. The dynamics of "pure thought" belong to superstition.

#### METHOD AND SYSTEM OF VALUE

§ 5. But *discoverers* are apt to ignore rules (a "Logica Utens" seems a sorry camp-follower of genius!). Sometimes, too, they commend Methods which are after-the-event ornaments of a Preface! And it is true that a master-mind, Carlyle's "man with an eye," may achieve much without heed of procedure. In the realms apportioned to Science, the innovator has often recked little of Method. On the other hand, authoritative exponents of Method have often been hostile to discovery. Thus Bacon held Copernicus a visionary, and cast stones at a Galileo and a Gilbert outright. Further, his rules for discovery were sterile. The "man with an eye" had done well already, and was to do even better, and without indebtedness to him, later. Still, to make generalisations on principle, and with full awareness of the grounds of their worth, is better than to generalise by natural instinct. The step, while not vital to *discovery*, is important in respect of the need of *proof*. For genius some truths are immediate; for disciples a mediation is necessary. Further, the truths demand organisation, a context. What is wanted is, not genial glances, but comprehensiveness—if possible, a *system* which allows easy deductive passage from the "whole" to the "parts." Such systems possess extreme worth for practice. Viewed as theoretic structures, as "significant wholes," they lack body. It is not in systems, however complete and coherent these may be, that one finds the essence and reality of things. Thought in this

garb never closes completely with its object. As substitute for this object it is defective. The systems, as embedded in statements, are abstract. They hold no mirrors up to appearance. Real themselves, but in their own peculiar way, they supplant and dissipate the reality of *which* they treat. As facts of an important sort they compel notice; as *vehicles* of live appearance they are makeshifts indeed. A god, hungry for knowledge, would starve on this kind of fare. *We* have to put up with it, simply because, for ordinary working purposes, we can get nothing better.

#### AN "ABSOLUTE METHOD" HAS BEEN PROFFERED

§ 6. Now, like men of science, metaphysicians may go far without recking much of their procedure. There is one standpoint, however, which assigns a unique importance to method. For Hegel, method is just philosophy in action, and there is no serious advance to be undertaken without it. There is an "absolute method," and its movement, which is dialectical, answers to the nature of REASON—the Cosmic Logos or "IDEA"—itself. It is sought to invade Reason, to immerse ourselves, so far as finites can, in the very life of that logically articulated and timeless Whole. For some this ideal has its charm. But we shall find that the quest so valorously upheld must be abandoned; that, in sober seriousness, the advance from Kant to Hegel ends in a blind alley. Kant's Categories, which, augmented, dialectically interconnected, and systematised, ensoul the thinking of Hegel, are figments—curios of philosophy which are lodged only in certain heads. A dialectical self-movement as asserted of categories (however named) is illusory. The concept or category is sterile; at best, it unites "moments"



which it does not posit. And this cult of the Category finds no support in appearances; Reason or the Logical lacking due show in "contingent" Nature and History.<sup>1</sup> Were REASON what Hegel terms it in the *Philosophy of History*, "sovereign of the world," a study of rational dynamics would be requisite. But it is more than likely that this sovereignty does not exist. We shall urge anon that REASON stands for no *prius*, but for certain devices and happenings which, being important for man and animal, get labelled with an imposing name. Reason has no claim to a reality grounding, and inclusive of, all else. For the present, however, we may dismiss Panlogism. And, outside Panlogism, there seems no call for an "absolute method" consciously and unremittingly used as the indispensable instrument of metaphysical advance.

§ 7. For ourselves, we shall do well to observe Method. The demands of proof are insistent, and discovery itself will not, perhaps, be worsened by guidance. As regards discovery, our handling of Method will be elastic; we require simply a regulative which promises to be convenient. Devices yet to be

<sup>1</sup> Thus Schwegler, interpreting Hegel, alludes to Nature as "a Bacchantic god, uncontrolled by and unconscious of himself. It offers, then, no example of an intelligibly articulated, continuously ascendant gradation. On the contrary, it everywhere mingles and confounds the essential limits by intermediate and spurious products which perpetually furnish instances in contradiction of every fixed classification. In consequence of this impotence on the part of Nature to hold fast the moments of the notion, the philosophy of Nature is constantly compelled, as it were, to capitulate between the world of the concrete individual products and the regulative of the speculative idea" (*History of Philosophy*, Dr Hutchison Stirling's translation, 8th ed., p. 332). Clearly, a *ratio mersa et confusa* must be mooted. But how so, if Reason is the *sole stuff* of which things are made? The resource (positing of a Hyle) open to the Platonising Cudworth is denied to Hegel.

suggested may be better. As regards proof, we want to show clearly that where we are to tread, others can obviously tread also. Experience—as well outer as inner—is the text; Method is the manner in which we are to read it. If others object to the readings, the text lies before them, and the way in which we have turned over or interpreted the pages can be criticised. The essential thing is—not to turn over the pages in a particular order, but rather to make one's reading comprehensive. Those who read mostly confine their attention to paragraphs, and the upshot is a certain hold on Reality—but narrowness. The metaphysician is not concerned to read all the paragraphs word by word, but to eye them in such fashion that he grasps the *general purport* of the entire text. This is his sole interest, or, as it might be called, and perhaps appropriately, by one of the paragraph-students, his prejudice. The vast majority of men only look at picked paragraphs; and, if the world is worth running, it is well that their interests are thus specialised. From the standpoint of a demiurge, a race of Hegels or Platos would spell failure. The philosopher, he of the contemplative type, who thinks synoptically but does little besides, fills, after all, a humble place in the story of the world's travail.

#### METHOD AND THEORIES OF TRUTH—THE PLAIN MAN'S THEORY

§ 8. So method, consciously pursued, is to assist us in the quest of truth. Method, indeed, is to be the manner in which we propose to think *truly*. What, then, is Truth? Well, the plain man answers off-hand, Thinking is true when statements copy, agree with, or *correspond to*, reality. By reality is meant ap-

pearances of the outward sort. "Dinosaurs lived in Mesozoic times"; "Jupiter has satellites"; "action and reaction are equal and contrary"—are cases of this accord. The false, again, is statement which clashes with this outward fact or Real. Thus the Norse belief that, when thunder-clouds appear, Thor is driving his goat-drawn chariot across the sky, or the Hindu myth that Indra causes the monsoons, are false; the statements, with their associated ideas, not squaring with "hard" realities as they occur. This way of regarding Truth is good enough for most workaday uses. But if we delve into meanings, these words "copy," "correspond," "fact," "outward," "hard," "reality," etc., will give trouble. For metaphysics, at least, this crude form of the Correspondence-theory is worthless.

#### ABSOLUTIST THEORIES

§ 9. The theory of the plain man can be amended. But the Correspondence-theory is rejected by many thinkers with contempt. Some who impugn it regard the "true" as elusive and indefinable; abandoning, in fact, further inquiry as idle.<sup>1</sup> Others, again, find Truth idealistically in the harmony of *objects of thinking*; the duality emphasised by the Correspondence-theory being dropped. In the Hegelian system, God and Truth are synonymous.<sup>2</sup> Systematic co-

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Prof. Keyser in the *Hibbert Journal*, "The Universe and Beyond."

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Wallace, *Logic of Hegel*, Proleg. xxvi-xxvii. Hegel himself observes that "Truth . . . lies in the coincidence of an object with itself, that is, with its notion. That a person is sick, or that someone has committed a theft, may certainly be correct. But the content is untrue. A sick body is not in harmony with the notion of body, and there is a want of congruity between theft and the notion of human conduct" (*Doctrine of the Notion*, p. 263).



herence is the secret; in quest of coherence we drift towards the thought-unity of God. Now God, for us seekers, is hypothesis; and, in another context, the hypothesis may, or may not, turn out well. But this Hegelian God, at least, seems mythology. Truth as thought-whole, "self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled," is too mystical. This "whole," obviously, is not known; is it necessary, then, we ask, to *suppose* it? It is not as though the hypothesis were forced on us. On the contrary, the "Coherence-view" fails itself to "cohere." A judgment is *about*, not one with, its "real"; and a system of judgment is, admittedly, in like case. Truth, whatever position it holds, fails at least to *exhaust* the Real. A more advanced position is occupied by Bradley. He, too, avers that "Truth is the predication of such content as when predicated is harmonious and removes inconsistency and with it unrest." But he adds that Truth, as *merely* rational, never can attain this coherence and rest. The *Other* which conditions its being is not absorbed. Truth is not Ultimate, but stands revealed as contradictory show. The sole Real is the Absolute—*i.e.* experience wherein all appearances, thought included, fuse harmoniously as aspects of a perfect Whole. This mystical theory of Truth and the metaphysics of Absolutism will be controverted incidentally as we proceed.

#### PRAGMATISM: ITS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

§ 10. Pragmatism subordinates Truth to practice, averring that the truth of a statement lies in its consequences, and particularly in these being good or satisfactory consequences. And the satisfactory? "Satisfactoriness has to be measured by a multitude

of standards, of which some, for aught we know, may fail in a given case; and what is 'more' satisfactory than any alternative in sight, may to the end be a sum of *pluses and minuses*, concerning which we can only trust that by ulterior corrections and improvements a maximum of the one and a minimum of the other may some day be approached. It means a real change of heart, a break with absolutistic hopes, when one takes up this view of the conditions of belief." Those thoughts are true "which guide us to *beneficial interaction* with sensible particulars as they occur, whether they copy these in advance or not" (James). Pragmatism combines various contentions with this view. It condemns the dialectical torturing of gaunt Categories. Appearance is the gateway that leads to wisdom. Thinking must feed on appearances; and appearances are, in part, what we as concrete, active beings in time make and have made them. It insists, further, on the purposiveness of thinking and on the practical needs, in response to which reasoning arose, and which it still subserves. We may describe Pragmatism as a phase only of a long-maturing and widespread revolt—the revolt against Formalism and allied fashions of thought. This rising began long ago, and in its early days some of the radicals of the Hegelian Left counted for much. But the Luther of the metaphysical reformation is Schopenhauer. For his metaphysics of WILL threatens what he calls "university-philosophy" at its base.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer's rendering of the WILL is, in part,

<sup>1</sup> There is no absolute originality here. Schelling, when sick of formalism and intellectualism, had mooted the hypothesis of the *Immemorial Being*, and there are stray observations of Fichte which present his "Absolute Ego" as Alogical activity rather than Thought.



fanciful, leaves, no doubt, much unsaid; but, nevertheless, the epoch-making step has been taken. The Eternal Legislative Truth-Whole is swept aside. Schopenhauer enthrones the Alogical, driving Reason from the sovereignty of the world. Hegel had found Reason not so powerless as to be unable to realise its ideals;<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer reduces it to faculty of discursive thinking. It is urged that there is no reasoning outside human heads; that this faculty has grown up in response to practical needs and subserves still purely empirical ends; that wisdom lies not in dialectical verbiage, but in the appearances which fill our concrete life.<sup>2</sup> Not a consistent thinker, hampered in part by faults of temperament, in part by the legacy of Kant, Schopenhauer penned much that a critical tribunal will reject. Nevertheless, his services to the metaphysical reformation are such as must ensure for him lasting fame.

### A CRITICISM

§ 11. Pragmatism seems an interesting, but, withal, passing phase of this movement toward reformation. Its innovation, the theory of Truth, is not happy. And the bare statement of the doctrine invites to dogma. The consequences of Truth have to be *satis-*

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of History*, Bohn's translation, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> This radical empiricism is developed by Nietzsche, for whom the philosopher becomes the creator of "values" and the categories are true only in the sense that they are useful in the struggle of life. "Les catégories ne sont des vérités qu'en ce sens qu'elles sont pour nous des conditions d'existence : de même que l'espace d'Euclide est pour nous une pareille vérité conditionnée. . . . Il ne s'agit pas de connaître, mais, d'imposer au chaos assez de régularité et de formes pour satisfaire notre besoin pratique" (see Gaultier's *Nietzsche et la Réforme Philosophique*).

*factory*? But by which of the "multitude" of standards is satisfactoriness to be measured? At times, I presume, by an emotional—a possibility at which metaphysicians may well take alarm. This fear is shown to be well founded. Thus Schiller avers that Ultimate Reality *must* be "absolutely satisfactory," and that, if the pursuit of Truth could reveal a "chamber of horrors in the innermost shrine," we should decline to accept this showing. Well, some folk espouse metaphysics just to see what happiness can be got out of it. And to shut their eyes to the showing would, for such men, be a resource not to be scorned. Shall we suggest that some interests need heroes, and that the cognitive interest or cult of knowledge may need thinkers of virile soul? A short shrift for Pessimism were welcome. But known appearances are such as to give us pause. The unsatisfactory is our customary fare. But we want, it would seem, to be optimists, so, leaving the known facts, we are to pronounce "satisfactory" what has yet to be found! You plead, perhaps, that Reality is "plastic," that the "reactions" of sentient centres mould it into worthier shape, and that this bettering has no assignable limit in time. But, *at present*, "reactions," however you interpret this term, are subjected to a power mightier than themselves. This power rejects arbitrary control. Your modifying activity is conditioned by what it confronts. You may effect much, or you may kick miserably against the pricks. And in the end you get simply this—Reality for sentient centres is what Experience reveals it to be. This Experience, which, in the main, is not made, but *comes*, is the autocrat. And "absolutely satisfactory" is a predicate not to be asserted of it dogmatically in advance. Metaphysics has its special

end; and its first business is certainly not to cheer or console. We are in quest of knowledge, and we accept loyally what symbolic truths knowledge may bring. The knowledge-cult is not unemotional, having its due leavening of joys and pains. It incurs, however, and with set intent, a considerable risk. In realising its end, it may reach what, in respect of rival interests and ends, is disastrous. Stalwarts may dislike this risk, but they will not for that forgo the adventure.

My thinking, urges Pragmatism, is purposive. But this view is not novel, was voiced, for example, by Schopenhauer, and may be accepted by absolutists and empiricists alike. In the main this contention is true. There are assuredly thoughts that arise we know not why, but, speaking generally, we think, towards an interest. We may contend here that thinking and doing are intertwined; consider them, perhaps, as aspects of a fuller whole which includes both. But to make one aspect exist for the sake of the other invites trouble. Ordinarily we confront process in which one aspect is emphasised, while the other is more or less ignored. And these emphases are apt to lead folk astray. Hence philosophers have often made the "Idea" swallow "Will," or, again, "Will" swallow the "Idea"; but always the resulting chronic dyspepsia seems decisive.

The harnessing of thought to practice is easily overdone. Thus it has been alleged that my thinking is "*first and last and always for the sake of my doing.*" By doing here is meant motor reaction on stimulus, "cognition" being "incomplete until discharged in act." There is a reflex-action theory to which philo-



sophy, it is supposed, must conform.<sup>1</sup> My reply is, Amend the theory. It is self-condemned because it is careless of facts. We think so much for which this "doing" has no use. There are vast blocks of thinking which subserve not *such* practice at all. Voluntarists themselves pursue much that refutes this creed. Thus James dwells devotedly on the perception of space. *Thinking of this kind is indifferent, if not hostile, to the organic adjustive life*; it flows aloof from practical interests of this narrower sort. Am I assured that each "cognition" is a "moment in a motor phenomenon"? Well, what motor event "completes" my grasp of Kant's theory of Categories or of Bradley's views as to the nature of the Absolute? But to pursue this phase of the discussion were idle.

The practical and theoretical are *not* always intertwined, if "doing" is thus narrowly interpreted. But the sphere of "doing" is, of course, really wider. There is a practical side even to the most advanced process of thought. I *want* something—I want to know, there ensue changes, and in thus changing I realise a purpose. But this side is so unimportant, so free from emphasis, that I ignore it. I do not think just to initiate changes or barely *act*, but to realize a positively cognitive ideal, viz. a judgment or judgments about reality *as it is*. And it is this second side which I note when I decline to regard thought as merely practical. The truths reached in

<sup>1</sup> "It is far too little recognised how entirely the intellect is built up of practical interests. The theory of Evolution is beginning to do very good service by its reduction of all mentality to the type of reflex action. Cognition, in this view, is but a fleeting moment, a cross-section at a certain point of what in its totality is a motor phenomenon" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 313).



thinking are not final; their awareness of the Real is not adequate. But, taken at their worst, they are precious; they result from an activity that struggles to expand, to appropriate, to *know*; and can in no case be discussed simply and solely as "guides to action."<sup>1</sup>

#### ANOTHER WAY OF REGARDING TRUTH

§ 12. We are not prepared to accept one of these widely contrasted theories of Truth. Accordingly, it becomes seasonable to state some not unworkable hypothesis of our own. Proof entire is not offered at this stage; illumination of our standpoint must be gradual. A truth-theory exacts more metaphysics than at present we are in a position to supply. We have to use terms such as "real," "object," "presentation," "centre," "relation," etc.—terms with which we shall not deal adequately till we have got far on our road. And the critic will sight difficulties which, perhaps, seem understated or even ignored. Something not quite unsatisfactory may be accomplished. But the theory must be judged, not off-hand, but during the progress of the development that is to ensue.

#### THERE IS NO MYSTICAL BODY OF TRUTH

Mill's "sum of true propositions" is helpful. There is no mystical body of Truth which, in some fearful and wonderful manner, feeds human intellection. There are sums and systems of propositions which, in respect of some vaguely felt common feature, are termed "true." We must be rid of an abstraction

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Part II. Chap. VI. § 6, "Thinking not merely for the sake of doing."



which, like its kin Beauty, Justice, Goodness, etc., tends to cumber philosophical ground. The big nut to crack is, What is *the true proposition*? A proposition, again, belongs, on the first showing, to this or that sentient centre or "thinking man." We deny, accordingly, that "an enormous quantity of truth must be written down as having pre-existed to its perception by us humans."<sup>1</sup> It is *we* who, noting the real, fix the results in propositions. The real and the true are not interchangeable terms. Truth implies a sentient centre that asserts *about* the real; implies a consciousness wherein the differencing of subject and object is advanced; the divisions of inward and outward standing well apart. No sentient centres, no assertory propositions, no truths. As to the "systems" — a system, as opposed to a "sum," is an arrangement which exhibits some plan. Most systems (whether they subserve practice or slake a theoretic curiosity as well) comprise representative fictions. But wherever the arranged propositions show truth, they possess the following feature in their own right. In the end a statement is true, not because it is mediated, not because it coheres with, or hangs from, a statement or statements, but because it draws attention to what its object is or contains. There is no "self-fulfilling process" of ideal relations. There are various arrangements of propositions which more or less meet our wants. But that self-supported pile, the timeless and immutable palace of truth, is not to be found.

#### TRUTH AND FACT

§ 13. The palaces or hovels of truth are to be constructed, if at all, only in time; their possessors are

<sup>1</sup> James, in *Mind*.

particular thinking men. But of what materials are these structures being built? A truth-claiming proposition or statement affirms something—the predicate—about something else called the subject; emphasises a relation which obtains somewhere *in fact*. It is not a device which connects mere names or concepts; the subject qualified by the predicate is believed to *exist*. Truth is “about” Reality and nothing less. And the “about” marks a severance which must give us pause. The situation is somewhat strange. All appearances exist and are real. Hence the proposition, as appearance in a conscious centre, is *itself real*. But this solid reality of presence is not its truth. The true implies a reference, an outgoing—the statement goes out to *reality beyond itself*, claims to stand for, even to absorb, the object of which it holds. The object, on its side, refuses to be played with or swamped. While you *appropriate* after your fashion and according to your interests, it *also* dictates. The plain man notes this vaguely. Hence the location of truth *in this object* is popular and, one may add, even usual. Common sense wants to “get at” truth in *things*; science is said to interrogate Nature and *transfer* imparted “truths” into books; mysticism abjures thinking and would pilot us *toward* the intuition of the “Living Truth.” The plain man, in short, finds in the object somewhat independent that the thinker must assimilate or simply face. We note a difficulty here, and it is one that must be frankly met. Already, however, we own one conviction that will serve us well. Truth is true when indicative of what its object is or contains. But what, in last resort, is this object? And is the severance between it and Truth ultimately fact? The full answer depends on what the metaphysics of the sentient centre turns out to be.



The proposition is my possession, an inwardly existent fact.<sup>1</sup> I am not always clear as to what happens when I have it. It may recur stubbornly and with effect, though the conditions which conspired to its first making have long passed away. I seem to exploit it and argue with it and operate on it just as though no *Real* were thundering without. But, for all that, at bottom the reference to that OTHER holds good. If I leave thought-algebra and probe into meaning, I implicate awareness of realms (sensible, imaginary, intellectual, etc.) of this Real. Formal Predication, when complex and symbolic, tends to mask this fact. However, delving below word-complexes, we can confront the radical type of true thinking at once. "Grammar," we must recall, "is child of gesture, . . . predication is but the adult form of that self-same faculty of sign-making which we know as indication."<sup>2</sup> Let us leave, then, the sphere where we symbolise. Let us survey the radical type freed from the confusions of language. When we have seen in what this type consists, the conceptual and symbolic kinds of thinking will present no difficulty. The clue once in hand, we can always fare back to the labyrinth.

#### THE RADICAL TYPE OF THE TRUE PROPOSITION

§ 14. I descend to the hotel salon, interested in the coming of winter and winter's sports. "What sort of an outlook?" I perceive a snow-touched pine before the window. Now what have we here? I could *say*, of course, "The pine is touched with snow." In this

<sup>1</sup> The proposition when I am not aware of it is, at best—ink!

<sup>2</sup> Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Man*.



case I should, in non-natural, academic language, predicate a "logical meaning" of a subject which is "referred to reality." But predication of this sort is absent. I am simply aware—aware of an aspect set amid other aspects in a whole to which it belongs. Perception is ruled by an urgency that selects. Something, itself strong, reinforced, too, by apperceptive interests, struggles or breaks out of the wholeness in which presentation comes. Out of this something, again, emerges something else. But though there is *emergence*, there is no *separation*. Hence there is required no "synthesising" or "relating"—nothing such as intellectualists set up and adore as JUDGMENT. There is no reunion of distinct separates, for there is no sundering in the ground-presentation itself. The relations and the related lie alike in sensible fact. I do not *refer* anything to reality; I *notice* aspects *in* reality, or rather the aspects constitute, in a more or less developed centre, my notice. So far, so good. I enjoy, then, a limited awareness of the Real. I turn to a friend and make a statement: "Snow on the pine," "Snow," or what not. This statement is true. It indicates as present in reality a feature which reality owns, but the statement as first made is only valid for me. So many centres of consciousness, so many presentative wholes. The statement turns out true for the kind of percipient I call my friend. It is true because it points out what for him is sensibly *there*. It would not, perhaps, do the like for visitors from the Dogstar. We are not to assume that all presentative wholes emerge (or are even ideally amplified) in one "universal and necessary" way. It is an assumption, and a gratuitous one, that the worlds of all sentient centres "correspond."

## WHAT IS TRUTH?

§ 15. And so we are nearing light. In the popular correspondence-theory of Truth, Reality, which covers only so-called "hard," outward fact, is interpreted in too narrow a way. And this Reality and the true proposition which agrees with it, are regarded as essentially different and held apart. They are so different that they cannot come together naturally at all. They are related, accordingly, in some quite unintelligible manner, across an abyss. For us, on the contrary, the twain are in a centre—a *sentient personal experience* in whose wholeness these different, never irremediably divided, are set. Here, at least, yawns no abyss. The Real of which we are aware is, also, that "Other" with which the proposition, an equally real appearance, agrees. Often the agreement may seem inconsiderable, nay, trifling; but provided that such agreement forwards a purpose, the proposition or arrangement of propositions is sufficiently true. Truth means propositions which, in view of our ends, can be taken as, and substituted for, the appearances with which they agree.<sup>1</sup> It is a *human-propositional makeshift*—a surrogate for primary reality, which, as "past," "remote," or merely anticipated, cannot be directly felt. It is a poor thing, but it satisfies the plain man's thirst for "knowledge," and assuredly enables us to guide our actions to advantage. Logic is the science of

<sup>1</sup> As social beings we make much of propositions. But, of course, a non-verbal representation of a fact, *e.g.* of a snowy mountain, may be considered true. *A fact itself*, it is treated as *substitutable*, in view of practical and theoretic ends, for *other* fact. It is true if it agrees sufficiently with the mountain to serve, in my mind, in its place. The mountain for me is, after all, only a possible perception.

propositions in so far as these spectral substitutes subserve inference.

BUT WHAT IF "THOUGHT" CONSTITUTES, OR  
CONDITIONS, SENTIENT EXPERIENCE?

§ 16. I have laid stress on "awareness" of the Real. It is on this basis that all thinking worth the name must found. But philosophers have urged that these awarenesses are themselves "constituted" or conditioned by "Thought." Otherwise, they contend, the world which we know in common, the system which is independent of "passing impressions" or the "course of our ideas," could not exist. This common abiding world is a system *which we are obliged to think*. "Thought" is not merely developed *within* experience; it is also and essentially the condition of experience itself. I alluded to this standpoint just now, and shall have to deal with it more fully anon. For the present, I will say simply this. There is a difficulty, but it is not to be solved by appeals to a relating "Thought."

TRUTH IS UNSATISFACTORY

§ 17. There is a further consideration that can only be indicated now. The banquet of truth-seekers promises to be a Barmecide's feast. A complete propositional system, were such practicable, would disappoint. Comprehensiveness it would possess—at the cost of the detail that giveth life. General thinking selects or accents features wherein we strive to grip appearances as a whole. And in struggling towards this end we lose sight, in great measure, of the appearances from which we start. Contrast the "ideal syntheses," or abstract laws, of Science with

a look down the Champs Elysées or with the view enjoyed from the Montanvert at Chamounix. The light of life has gone out of these miserable truths. Practical uses apart, such truths are makeshifts indeed. We are in this fix: we want an empire, and we acquire, perhaps, if we are fortunate, a map. It is no use, of course, crying for the moon. Even perceptions select; and in scientific and philosophical thinking the process has to be carried further still. But at least we can understand why a Schelling leaves philosophy and applies to mysticism for richer fare. And later we must be allowed to ask: Is a *more complete awareness* than Truth possible?

#### THE TRUTH SOUGHT BY METAPHYSICS

§ 18. What now is the Truth sought by metaphysics; the true being interpretable on the lines just discussed? *It is an arrangement of propositions which, in respect of our special end, may be taken as the same as the universe.* Now, this grasping at a universe seems idle, and, but for the modest character of our purpose, would be so. Our knowledge of appearance is fragmentary. There may exist superhumans beside whom we rank as ants. But who desires to debate contentions so obvious as these? The universe in its fulness is neither to be had, nor *for thinking* is it required. All that we propose to ask is what its general nature may be. And we know enough, perhaps, of appearances to undertake this task undismayed.

#### ERROR AS ILLUSTRATED BY MATERIALISM

§ 19. Truth dwells in propositions which, as substitute-facts, can be *taken as* the same as Reality.



Error, on the contrary, implies propositions which, in respect of a given purpose, are *mis-taken* for Reality. Materialism is erroneous, and why? Its ground-proposition asserts: "The universe is matter in motion." Conscious experience seems refractory, but is described withal as a "special mode" of motion;<sup>1</sup> if it were not, the ground-proposition would, of course, immediately collapse. Now what is this "matter" in which Materialism puts its trust? It is a *concept* which accents certain abstractly viewed features of the Real—features of "extension" and "inertia" miserably inadequate to the wealth of sensible fact.<sup>2</sup> And these features, taken absolutely, and alleged to contain or produce everything else, are overworked.

Imagine some billiard-balls, strip them verbally of their "secondary" qualities, and having whittled them down to units compact of extension and inertia, suppose them to move. These are the ultimates of Materialism, and they are real, if at all, *only in a barely intellectual domain*. Now Reality includes this particular domain, but the commanding consideration is that it includes so very much more. The proposition of Materialism cannot, then, be taken as the general nature of the Real. The substitute-fact does not agree sufficiently with that for which it is substituted and stands. It indicates two poor phases of the Real, and *mis-takes* these for the expanse of Reality as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> "Special" is amusing. Büchner's words are "a special mode of general natural motion."

<sup>2</sup> Enlightened physicists are fully alive to this truth. An inquiry into "matter" means for them "an investigation into the phenomena which are associated with mass" (Whetham, *Recent Developments of Physical Science*, p. 27). Science is to leave the ultimate problems connected with "matter" to metaphysics.

§ 20. Error is positive, or, at least, has a positive side. It is not lost in a contrast which accents Truth. Primarily it is a standpoint which exists for, and insists upon, itself. It claims truth, and, thus claiming, goes forth to war, working at times untold woe on the journey. Discord such as this rends some venerable systems in twain. What place can intellectualist and absolutist philosophers assign to Error? Its positive character is that it denies, stands out sharply against, that Harmony which they demand. A live discord—an unreduced conflict—within the Absolute is fatal. Still, Error appears, and cannot be simply ignored. It is referred to the Absolute, and, hey presto! the Absolute harmonises and transforms it. But if Error is “de-natured,” what of this insistent appearance is left? Those who enjoy seeing philosophers in trouble have a chance here not to be missed.<sup>1</sup> As for us, we note that Error appears, and we incline strongly to hold that to appear is also to be real. We suspect, also, that this Absolute does not appear, or appears rather in a very limited domain, in the thinking of those who conceive or try to conceive it. And, having no harmony to *force*, we are indifferent as to what we shall find. Discord, which includes Error, may be fundamentally and ultimately real.

#### METHOD RECONSIDERED

§ 21. We have now reached a working notion of Truth, and we return, therefore, to the subject of Method. We know whither we are making, and we have to indicate, accordingly, the manner of getting

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, on “Error,” pp. 184–196; and Joachim, *The Nature of Truth*, on “The Negative Element and Error,” pp. 122–180.

there. Well, conformably to what has been said, the Method or manner of procedure is Adequation. Propositions must somehow be adequated to their object—the general nature of Reality, or the universe of appearance. And history attests that this kind of thinking is not easy. The text of appearance is, of course, incomplete. And we observe that philosophers dispute as to the purport of that portion which we possess. Nay, these men are at war over fundamentals. Some see, or think they see, printed in capitals what others assert roundly not to be there. Some read too little, and most, if the sceptic is not too censorious, amiss. A study of the conflict inspires caution. We must find bedrock before we can safely build. What, then, is the sceptic prepared to concede? Well, he admits readily that appearances flow. Complete nihilism is, or would be, a disease of language. Appearances described as “nothing” are being qualified and not annulled. The sceptic will allow, further, that the appearances must be felt or known. We arrive, then, at the proposition: *Appearances, as aspects of sentient experience, appear*. We have no mind to live shivering in this rag of metaphysical certitude. But how are we to procure garments of more substantial worth?

#### A PROVISIONAL SOLIPSISM DESIRABLE

§ 22. But thoroughness compels me to modify even this statement. I will start by having the Universe, theoretically speaking, to myself. I will assert: Appearances, as aspects of MY sentient experience, appear. In and through these possessions I am to find or glimpse everything else. Truth is to ripple out from this point to other “selves” and all else



that may lie beyond. I must effect deliberately, in the form of conscious thought, what natural process has effected already for so many of my practical beliefs.

And this solipsistic resolution is sound. For the appearances, of which I am directly and immediately aware, fill *this* centre; belong to a consciousness which seems unshared by, and impervious to, other "selves," if such exist. Sensations, perceptions, conceptions, emotions, or what not—all these alike fall within the circle where I abide. Experience, whatever be its import, is revealed, at least, in content peculiar to me. And thought must struggle outwards from this circle with care. To "intuite" the Absolute, and ground myself and all else in it, might be ventured.<sup>1</sup> But a leap of this kind is too violent. The appearances relied on do not indisputably comprise or attest so much. They seem primarily, and in first intention, to belong to *this* centre. The Universe, maybe, is my possession; the Absolute, a passing state which I, and I alone, feel or "think." I may not assert this view, but I note that it can be entertained. And if thought stumbles at this point, calls a halt to make sure of its ground, the hesitation, it seems, is decisive. A dogmatic procedure must be jettisoned. I waver! Then I am not getting clear of myself so easily and intuitively after all! Subjective idealism, nay, even solipsism must be mooted. Let me stand, then, in the first instance, at these view-points and measure, in sober and judicial fashion, their exact worth.

<sup>1</sup> Schelling's Absolute and Spencer's "indefinite consciousness" of the Unknowable (*sic*) may be cited. Speaking generally, we may say—so many intuitionists, so many different sorts of Absolute!



## A GUARDED TRUST IN MEMORY IS IMPLIED

§ 23. The Method starts, then, from my centre, asserting that appearances, which, perhaps, are only "mine," appear. There is no assertion of an Ego: an advanced contention, disputable, and yet to be reached. A trust in present consciousness is assumed, and it remains to note and exploit carefully what is there. But a trust in present consciousness does not suffice. Present, immediate, or direct, experience is too limited. A belief in *past* appearances is requisite: a guarded trust in Memory must be forthcoming. The "specious" Present, with its solidly and directly felt lapse, spans a few seconds interval of time. Clearly, then, direct experience does not provide all the matter that I require. I have to get at *the* Universe through *my* universe, and, at this particular moment, my universe is mostly recalled from the past. I say "recalled," but, strictly speaking, no appearance, which I have once known recurs. The memory-past is in the "specious" Present, and the terms or sentiency-aspects in which it is given are new. This arrangement, satisfactory, on the whole, for practice, is not so obviously convenient to theory. A past upheld only in the "present" may give trouble. And there are, admittedly, limits to the acceptance of it. But, again, the noting of limits implies that the general belief in past consciousness is correct. A god might deceive me with a present consciousness that does not *represent*, but *simulates*, a past; still in metaphysics, as in many other ventures that promise well, I am content to take reasonable risks.

The past does not, of course, appear solely through Memory. There is the fundamental or primary past

which is intuited or directly felt. A sequence of different feelings marks consciousness. And the popularly supposed scene of the sequence, the "Now," contains process. The "Now" reveals an "after" and "before," and offered as a real—solid, single, and undivided—has been rejected by many as contradictory. I must deny that non-verbal appearance contradicts itself or anything else. But it remains true that the "Now" subsists through *relativity*, appearing as a live point ever travelling along a line of change. The changeless "Eternal Now" of some mystics is nonsense. Before—now—after—are mutually constitutive, and the abolition of one is also the abolition of all.

#### A METHOD OF ADEQUATION

§ 24. The contrast induction—deduction, analysis—synthesis, is not absolute. A thorough-going inductive procedure includes deduction. But the Method is inductive in the best sense of the word. It looks askance on academic "principles," and rejects high and dry deductions outright. I am to think, as far as possible, with the object at call. And I start, not from a speculative Absolute, but from the directly known circle of fact which is allied with "myself." *Festina lente!* I begin with bald but safe truth—truth altogether inadequate to the Real as I want to get it. And I am to render truth more and more adequate until an arrangement of propositions, fulfilling my theoretical purpose, comes to exist. Now there are two main phases of Adequation. In the first, I remain *within* my Centre; in the second, I have to pass beyond this centre into a co-essential enveloping system that lies *without*. In the first phase I confront issues such as the theory of an Ego owning and,

perhaps, manifest in its states. In the second phase I go out reflectively to Centres other than my own, and beyond these, maybe, to the general nature of the Reality in which they lie. Progress will be made from the Certain through the realms of the Probable towards the Possible. It is idle to expect certitude throughout. Nay, we shall avoid disappointment if we suspect that the sphere of the Certain is, relatively speaking, of small extent.

#### CONSIDERATIONS OF GENESIS, OF DEVELOPMENT

§ 25. Considerations of genesis, of development, must have weight. The contents of the Centre have a history, and this history may throw light on much which, as *now* given, is obscure. In this Centre were born subject and object, nay, my universe of facts and beliefs; out of a Neutrum of feeling sprang and flowered the entire experience which I have and recall. And the way in which this experience has arisen may import much for the study of the contents as they now are.

#### THE MASTER-CLUE TO ADEQUATION

§ 26. In passing beyond my Centre, I am gratifying no arbitrary caprice. I am doing as conscious thinker what practical belief, though not to the same extent, has done long before. And it is an error to suppose that I am unfavourably circumstanced for thought. The nature of the Real seems such as to dictate my task. The master-clue is Relativity: most aspects of appearance, if I regard them closely, waft me to others with which they are implicated, and, failing which, they would not be quite what they are. All things,

as the poet says, "in one another's being mingle"; to be fully aware of one aspect is to find that it does not simply present itself. I begin by verifying this truth within the Centre. But my very inventories of the Centre will tend to carry my thought beyond it—will suggest supplementation in idea of the features and events which I find actually there. There is so much *within* the Centre which seems relative to, and, in part, dependent on an order *without*. I am not directly aware of the Enveloping System itself. But I am forced, nevertheless, to suppose and construct it in thought. The awareness remains symbolic, even though later the system is conceived to include "Myself."

Preliminaries are now reasonably complete. Standing provisionally, then, within "my" Centre I proceed to open the actual inquiry at once.



## Part II

### THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS UNIVERSE

#### CHAPTER I

##### APPEARANCES

WE have been able to advance the statement: Appearances, as aspects of "my" sentient experience, appear. We have now to urge that these appearances, however incomplete and supplementable they may be, are real.

#### I. APPEARANCES ARE REAL

§ 1. This statement means that Appearances *are* what my sentient experience reveals them to be. A thoroughgoing nihilism were idle, since, as we urged, to qualify a fact as "nothing" is not to annul it. Doubt and denial themselves are but phases of appearance. Appearances continue to well up, name or describe them as I may. But there is a competent or higher scepticism which demands note. For this standpoint appearances *as such* are unreal, but *belong*, withal, in more or less transmuted form, to Reality. The reality in question is the Absolute: an experience which "embraces all differences in an inclusive harmony" (Bradley). This Absolute is above time—is complete, perfect, and finished. All modes of experience which fall short of it show mere degrees of

reality, and thought about them is more or less false. In respect of these assertions the modern idealistic Absolutists and the Vedantin monists of ancient Hindu philosophy seem in accord. Statements of this character outrun any possible direct evidence which can be adduced.

### THIS ABSOLUTE IS PURELY SPECULATIVE

§ 2. Possession is nine points of the law, and appearances (so far as I know anything or about anything) hold the field. And they declare, it would seem, with naive candour what they really are. But the testimony of these appearances is to be set aside. There is an authority, so it is averred, who asserts that they lie. But where does this Authority, the Absolute, dwell? I examine the contents of my experience, and he is not to be found. Shall I locate him in what the Scotch call the "Back of Beyont"? A more apposite suggestion is that he lives, a verbal entity, in somebody's head.

On the one side, the content I know; on the other, the Absolute, which, save as verbal entity, is unknown! For this Absolute absorbs and transmutes nothing of which I am aware—reigns nowhere in that sentiency whole which I survey. Appearances, in short, ignore it with one consent. Why, then, was this Absolute advanced at all? There is suggested æsthetic love of unity: over-assimilation in the interest of a harmony which, not being found, has to be made. There are further involved misunderstandings, which we must notice anon, as to "Contradiction" and Relativity. But, waiving these points, let us take over this hypothetical Absolute and see how it works.

THIS SPECULATIVE ABSOLUTE DOES NOT WORK

§ 3. Appearances, it is urged, are not real, but "belong to" Reality, that is to say, to Absolute experience, and admittedly they do not belong to it *as I know and feel them*; they obtain there "harmonised," and in some cases radically transformed. Error, for instance, steps into the Absolute as Truth.<sup>1</sup> Now note to what this contention leads. The appearances which I own are not absorbed at all—not they, but something different is caught up into glory. The Absolute, if not containing my possessions *just as I have them*, cannot be said to contain them at all. The filling of my narrow life remains somehow outside its circle; thus motion, change, error, activity, evil—these appearances are all very insistent for me, but they have no place in the Absolute, or, at least, they enter into it in such form that their known characters are altered or wholly suppressed. "My" point of view simply disappears. What, then, is this Absolute? It is *another* centre of experience which feels content in a way inconceivable by me; it is a god with his unique, *but still* private and particular, point of view. In other words, this alleged Absolute is not an Absolute at all: so far from being complete, perfect, and finished, it excludes from itself the appearances which are distinctively mine. A sentient experience of vast span, it remains, withal, a finite beside a finite — is no Ultimate which includes all differences, exhausts all fact. To embrace these finites, a further "harmonising" Absolute must be posited, and so on.

§ 4. And now, of course, the appearances which I know and which as such are not absorbed, present

<sup>1</sup> "Error is Truth." Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 195.

difficulty. These appearances are said to be unreal here and now, and they are *not* set in glory in the firmament. They are evicted indeed, metaphysically speaking, from the universe. Disrespect for the finite centre has been carried too far!

§ 5. Thus this scepticism can be assailed from two sides. The Absolute is (1) too speculative. It is not given in, or attested by, what I know and feel. Its sphere is the Transcendent—the Back o' Beyont. (2) Even as speculative it does not work. It is, however, objection No. (1) which repels most. I am empiricist, and I am asked to sacrifice to the unknown, to do reverence to what seems barely a conceptual device. "Sentient experience," observes Bradley, "is reality." Well, let me suppose that this contention is true. I observe now that this experience and this reality are not at all far to seek. *They lie before me in the finite conscious Centre whose contents are directly known.* This Centre and its contents belong, peradventure, to a Wider Ground. But the Ground must be such as to *respect* and *accept* the reality of the finite centre. It must not "transform," "harmonise," "absorb"; it may be more than, but it must anyhow include, "my" experience.

#### THE APPEARANCES ARE MY ONLY ASSETS

§ 6. It is *only* through appearances in the Centre that I can close with Reality at all. Hence I might incline to *postulate* the appearances as real just to enable the inquiry to proceed; might recall Bain's words respecting *his* Universal Postulate:<sup>1</sup> "Without

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, i. 274. He transforms the alleged axiom of the "Uniformity of Nature" into a postulate, thus begging, as he asserts we must, the "major premise" of induction.



it we can do nothing; with it we can do anything. Our only error is in proposing to give any reason or justification of it, to treat it otherwise than as begged at the very outset. If there be a reason, it is not theoretical but practical." But this kind of procedure would never do. I cannot assume that appearances are real and make good my belief as I go. It is in terms of appearance that I think, and the last appearances can be no more reliable than the first. A justification, however, can be offered: the demonstration (there are demonstrations other than logical ones) lies in the nature of appearances themselves. Admittedly incomplete, these appearances, *so far as I have them*, are known through and through. What they are in another context, or for another conscious centre — well, that is *something else* and not my original solid experience at all. Hence I need not postulate that appearances are real: I record, in the form of a statement, that they are so. The appearances are self-luminous, and attest themselves. They flow as they are felt, and are felt as they flow. This is my instinctive belief, and there is nothing but conceptual word-jugglery to set against it.<sup>1</sup>

## II. APPEARANCE AND CONTRADICTION

§ 1. I take appearances, then, *as they appear*—as real; but may they not, perhaps, be often contradictory *as well*? Propositions are often contradictory,

<sup>1</sup> Bradley describes Metaphysics as the "finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct" (Preface, xiv, *Appearance and Reality*). His own metaphysics, however, consists largely in pitting "bad reasons" *against* what we thus believe; *e.g.*, to say that "I have a toothache" is not categorically true (*Principles of Logic*, pp. 133–4) is hardly to bear out the deliverances of instinct.

but subsist, nevertheless, as contending phases of the Real. Reality, so far as it contains this struggle, contains contradiction; and one might urge that it contains other contradictions as well. But here, for the moment, I call a halt. The practice of terming non-verbal appearances "contradictory" invites remark. This predicate is often forced and non-natural in the extreme.<sup>1</sup> A colour, a toothache, are appearances. Not, however, being propositions, they are "contradictory" neither of themselves nor of anything else. They simply *come*, and there is added what dialecticians *say* "about" them anon. Nevertheless, to object to this epithet is not to remove an obscure difficulty to which it points; and I propose, therefore, to examine this question of Contradiction at some length.

#### ARE APPEARANCES REAL AND "CONTRADICTIONARY"?

Meanwhile our position must not be misunderstood. I am not re-trying the case of appearances at all. We have agreed to accept these as real. If it be true that "the essence" of all finite beings and things "is contradictory," we shall not for that go back on our decision and admit that these finites are unreal. We shall assert simply that they are real and "contradictory" at once. After all, it is a question of matter of fact; and Metaphysics must respect fact and assimilate it as best it can.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OR "LAW" OF CONTRADICTION

§ 2. The principle of Contradiction (A cannot both be B and not-B) is commonly held to command assent.

<sup>1</sup> I must plead guilty to having spoken of the "contradictoriness of Reality" in my *Riddle* (1893).

Writers on formal logic have often upheld it as "an *a priori* law of thought." It seems to say very little, but this innocent-looking formula is aggressive. It arises, indeed, in Logic, but is apt to sally forth, with enormous pretensions, into Metaphysics.

#### PRACTICAL WORTH OF THE PRINCIPLE

All formulas of this sort must be questioned. Whether advanced as intuitions or generalisations, they must be justified in and by the instances or appearances of which they hold. We ought not to assert their *truth* till we have examined all the regions to which they apply. Taken as a maxim, "Get your asserting as consistent and harmonious as you can," and applied within a certain sphere, the formula of Contradiction has unquestionably its *practical* worth. "A" is not its opposite or contrary. Verbal signs are to be used so that they do not conflict, do not make us affirm in one form of discourse what we deny in another. Consistency, of course, is not always wanted. When the plain man finds that two propositions clash, he prefers sometimes to hold them apart, retaining belief in both, if his general well-being is increased thereby. And there are important situations in which inconsistency is useful, nay, practically enforced. Nevertheless, numberless practical interests conspire to make consistency desired. "There is no instinct needed but the broad instinct of self-preservation; were it not for this we should probably care very little about observing the conditions of necessary truth. If we could go on as well by maintaining an opinion in one form of words while denying it in another, there appears to be nothing in our mental constitution that would secure us against contradicting



ourselves.”<sup>1</sup> On the assumption that consistency is desired, “A cannot both be B and not-B” furnishes a safeguard whereby, to some extent, consistency is secured. The maxim presides, therefore, over formal logic. It helps, also, to scavenge my private propositional realm; its function furthering both my thought and the imparting of this thought to others. On the other hand, it supplies nothing which can support a metaphysical system.

### IS CONSISTENCY ALWAYS TO BE DESIRED?

§ 3. We approve, then, the “principle” applied in this way within a certain sphere—the sphere within which the non-contradictory or consistent is *desired*. Thus within the reasonings of symbolic logic, for example, the principle will be supreme: unless you affirm consistently, you defeat the purpose which underlies your procedure. Inconsistency in this field is, as the saying goes, “inadmissible.” But the question must now arise: Is strict consistency required for *all* purposes of thinking? My reply at this point is emphatic. It is the nature of Reality that has to decide the issue. Consistency is undesirable, if to attain it you must mutilate seriously the Real which you seek to know. And the answer will make much of defect: defect native to the *selective* character of perception and thought. As a practical being I have no quarrel with “rational” thought. A limited mode of awareness, it shows, also, the virtues of its defects. But as a theoretic being, as metaphysician, I must talk loudly of this Thought’s defects: flaws of a grave nature in view of the knowledge that I desire. Thought refers to, and exists through,

<sup>1</sup> Bain, *Logic*, i. 15.



Reality, but somehow it does not take up Reality quite as it is. An understanding of Thought's defects furthers, perhaps, the solution of the *cruz* of "contradiction."

#### THE PRINCIPLE AS APPLIED TO METAPHYSICS

§ 4. There have been men who identified Logic with Metaphysics. And there are those who, not venturing so far, nevertheless, uphold the formula of Contradiction literally against the world. "A cannot both be B and not-B" passes into "the Real is not contradictory."<sup>1</sup> And the metaphysician, thus armed, assails sensible qualities, change, motion, causation, activity, good and evil, time, space, Nature, the self, and a whole hierarchy of popularly accredited Reals. There is no practical attitude here; the formula is a generalisation (or "axiom") that claims to be true. And once accepted in this character it is formidable. Anything and everything, to which this supreme criterion is applied, goes down before it. Deftly turned and twisted in conceptual thought, all finites, from sensible qualities upwards, are revealed as inconsistent, *and, therefore*, unreal. An Absolute, uninvitingly perfect and complete, is upreared on the ruins of my universe.

#### THIS APPLICATION REJECTED

I am adopting an entirely different procedure. I know not, have no use for, this Absolute, am empiricist, and must think the universe through my experience. Appearances, the aspects of this experience, are real. I possess, am aware of, nothing which I can set against them. I regard "Principles" as mere generalities to

<sup>1</sup> Bradley.

be tested by the appearances to which they refer. If, now, you ask me about a reputed real, say the finite Individual, I take action as follows. First, I ascertain what you mean, and then I go to experience and strive to discover whether anything, answering to this meaning, *really appears*. Having found what really appears, I proceed further. Thus I may inquire, perhaps, whether it is contradictory. But can a Real, which has, anyhow, to be accepted, be held "contradictory"? Well, the predicate invites objection. Thus, the finite individual, not being a proposition, could not, strictly speaking, be contradictory. But it seems that it contains aspects which, *as isolated in the propositions of conceptual thought*, support contradictions. And there arises the issue—if these propositions conflict, what is it in the Real which allows the conflict?

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTRADICTION BREAKS DOWN

§ 5. "A cannot both be B and not-B" has its appropriate sphere. It breaks down only when misapplied. Consistency is often to be desired. But it is not to be desired when that of which you assert does not dictate it. And the Formula used as criterion of the Real, theoretically viewed, passes into untruth. A generalisation must be verified in what it covers. And it is a false generalisation that appearances—and appearances, we have agreed, are real—are barely and solely themselves. The aspects of my Centre lie in a *continuum* wherein

"Nothing is that's single ;  
All things, by a law divine,  
In one another's being mingle" ;

and in expressing this situation we must allow that A is B and also not-B. This relativity (in which one

real appearance enters into, pervades, and is, the other) is prominent in that notable contrast, Subject and Object. Here what are recognised contraries or incompatibles mutually negate, *and yet* constitute, one another. This relativity does not impair the reality of the Subject. The Subject is real in that its changeful nature is just what my experience reveals it to be.<sup>1</sup> And this nature, which exists as it is known and is known as it exists, implicates and also is something else.

Take, again, the entire finite Centre of experience. It is itself, and as such is indubitably real. But it is relative to an Enveloping System which assuredly enters into it, and, in great measure, makes it what it is. A is at once B and not-B. Take, again, the innumerable minor aspects within this Centre. Anything, as I know it, is also, if I look closely enough, something else. When I attend to the *practically important* point I say A is B; when I express the full situation, I add that it is not-B as well. An entirely irrelative element, a content, totally aloof from, and uncoloured by, another content, is not to be reached. At the same time, insistence on this relativity may carry us too far. Support may be sought here for a dialectical system such as Hegel's. This way, however, lies error. "The Concept" of Hegel is no *prius*: posits nothing, has no immanent movement, and belongs to a late psychological development within sentient humans. The driving

<sup>1</sup> Some have defined the Real as that which has all its conditions within itself. But, of course, only a speculative Absolute could be held as real in this unique way. A fact is none the less real for being related, however brief the span of its career.



power, the Ground of reality, seems Alogical. Later, I shall have to suggest on what Relativity, as empirically known, ultimately stands.

#### ON ARGUMENT WHICH APPEALS TO ANTINOMIES

§ 6. An Antinomy rests wholly on the assumption that A cannot be both B and not-B. If it is shown that A is both B and not-B, then it is urged that A is self-contradictory and cannot stand. But contradiction, if we are right, is not always a test of falsity. And a belief grounding an Antinomy is not necessarily to be condemned. Thus the belief may attach to no *speculative concept* (always justly an object of suspicion), but to somewhat that *really appears*. In this case (1) the Thesis, the Real is B, and (2) the Antithesis, the Real is not-B, may be equally true. If A is real, and if, when analysed (*i.e.* attended to closely), it displays both these sides, what more is there to be said? The Real, while Alogical, may be rich. And, if it genuinely supports both sides of the Antinomy—well, both sides of the Antinomy will have to be accepted. The mere *maxim* of contradiction does not apply. If the Real is “contradictory,” thought, also, must contain contradictions, or thought it false! Thought, in fine, need not be internally consistent. Its first duty is to be consistent with the appearance for which it stands (Part I. Chap. II. § 15).

When the contradictory statements rest not on appearance, but are “*proved*,” as in certain famous examples, “*from the pure reason*,” we confront Antinomies of the speculative or artificial type. We note, indeed, mental gymnastics, but nothing which has worth outside the conceptual world. There is no



"pure reason," and there is no absolute principle of contradiction which defies assault.

### CONTRADICTION AND CHANGE

§ 7. Regarding now the Time-Flux, we shall find that the generalisation or "law" of Contradiction is seemingly flouted by Change. The resource of the Absolutist is, consequently, to deny change; and this he does boldly, labelling it, with the most amazing assurance, as "unreal."<sup>1</sup> Why is Change unreal? Because it is intellectually incomprehensible. And why is it incomprehensible? Because we cannot admit it as ultimate fact and uphold the sacrosanct generalisation of contradiction as well. We are not, then, to receive appearances as they come, but to transform them in thought altogether, in virtue of a law generalised in certain philosophers' heads: a law to which our primary experience itself gives the lie.

The empiricist reckes nothing of this conceptual gymnastic. There is no court of appeal superior to appearances. Reality is manifest to him in these appearances, and in them alone. And he may suggest further that not merely the appearances which he knows, but the universe as a whole, ignore the alleged rigid "law" of contradiction. The entire universe, perchance, is continually becoming what it is not; the expression of its native "contradictoriness" being what we call Time.

Two last cautions. We must take heed that we do not limit Reality to what is "intellectually comprehensible." Intellect is, perhaps, a novelty—a development

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bradley and others.

out of antecedents wider than, and altogether unlike, itself. And we must set aside all emotional defences of Absolutism such as dread the "nightmare of change."<sup>1</sup> Change is no nightmare, but rather the salt of life. Further, failing *real* Change, we should confront a hideous universe indeed. Change is the scavenger of Reality. But a "rock-like fixity"<sup>2</sup> of Being implies that not one of the abominations which infect Reality is ever left behind. Evil lies frozen hard in the heart of the Absolute. The imperfect order we know is stereotyped beyond hope of betterment. Further reflections of this sort await us in due course at a later stage of the inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mr Bhagavân Dâss, *The Science of Peace*, p. 171 (T.P. Society).

<sup>2</sup> Another expression which I cull from Mr Dâss's book.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. more especially Part III. Chap. III. § 5, "On Novelty, Development and Progress."

## CHAPTER II

### APPEARANCES AND THE FINITE CENTRE OR INDIVIDUAL

#### CONTRADICTION AND THE FINITE CENTRE

§ 1. It has been urged, as we saw, that the Real must be understood in a way "free from contradiction." At the outset, therefore, of this chapter I must emphasise what has been stated before. Truth need not be internally consistent. Its primary duty is to be consistent with the Real. And the nature of the Real may be such as to support what, for discursive thinking, is self-contradictory. We are not to be bullied by a formula, and we are not to overrate the worth of conceptual thought. The formula of Contradiction is useful in its place, but is no infallible test of what is Real. On the contrary, it is by the light of the Real that we perceive how often the formula does not apply. As to conceptual thought, are we not very prone to extol its merits, while forgetting, or being ignorant perhaps of, its defects? The Concept takes up the phases of a complex too selectively or abstractly, too one-sidedly, too much in succession. We are apt to forget that concrete Feeling may hold, without internal jar, that which, analysed in conceptual thought, yields Antinomies and grave unrest.

APPEARANCES, AS ASPECTS OF MY SENTIENT EXPERIENCE, APPEAR. A PROVISIONAL SOLIPSISM JUSTIFIED.

§ 2. Appearances, as aspects of my sentient experience, appear—flow in a conscious Centre which can be regarded, at any rate, provisionally, as “mine.” Sensations and perceptions are of one tissue with volitions and thoughts. “My experience,” as the ablest of modern Absolutists allows, “falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it.”<sup>1</sup> Must I observe that this admission justifies the plan of inquiry adopted in this essay! If my experience is thus bounded, if I have no direct access to experience other than my own, an important contention has been vindicated. No immediate positing of an Absolute, no leaps to transcendent Ultimates, are permissible.<sup>2</sup> I have to start from *my possessions*; have to recognise that in them, and through them, lies the answer to the Riddle of the Universe.<sup>3</sup> This solipsism may be provisional, but is imposed, withal, by the nature of the way in which I know. I stand, then, within my Centre; but want to learn something about what lies beyond and supports it. How do I know that anything does lie beyond it? Well, at this stage of our inquiry I am ignorant; that is to say, I have offered no *proof* that anything of this character exists. What I possess is simply a practical belief: a belief due to psychical process of which, as adult, I own the result. This

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Part I. Chap. II. § 21.

<sup>3</sup> A plan adopted in my former work (1893), in connection with a Monadology.



belief precedes Metaphysics, and it serves to prompt the inquiry which I now make. To own this practical belief is one thing; to show that it answers to genuine fact, another. And I can transcend my limitations—so it would seem—merely *in idea*: a restriction which is fated, of course, to gall and depress. But in verity an interesting surprise is in waiting. My Centre, let me suppose, is not the Universe, but only belongs to it. The Universe cannot possibly be known by me in its fulness. Still, a portion of the greater may be found to appear in the less. And this portion, *directly and immediately* known, furnishes, perhaps, the vital point of contact required. I am standing *within* my Centre, but I shall be seen shortly to stand *outside* it as well. Even what is described as Nature penetrates me fragmentarily, but unalloyed. And now, having undertaken to emerge from the Centre, I must be permitted to fare onward and make good my promise.

#### THE "I" IS NO MERE SERIES OF ATOMISTIC "STATES"

§ 3. "What am I, the thing that can say 'I'?" asks Carlyle. This query rightly assumes that there is some sort of experience of the "I." But it suggests, further, that the "I" is an entity; and at this point, of course, controversies begin to rage. We shall not answer this query satisfactorily unless we bear a previous generalisation in mind. Sentient experience is our all. Hence verbal flights into the unknown are idle: dialectical disputes as to the Back o' Beyond disallowed. If the "I" is a fact, its position and function in experience can be made clear; our business will consist mainly in directing attention to where it lies. Empiricism has to ask: In what, and as what,

*appearances* is this "I" to be *found*? But an empirical procedure, excellent in itself, is not always utilised to the full. Thus the empiricism of Hume deals with the inquiry amiss. Hume describes the "I" as "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions";<sup>1</sup> and he contends that "every perception is distinguishable from another, and may be considered as separately existent." The "I," on this showing, is a series of atomistic states. Recurring to our theory of Truth, we perceive why this assertion is untrue. The proposition, in view of our end, cannot stand for, and be taken as, *Reality*. It emphasises as adequate to appearance ("I am conscious") what is inadequate. There is more to be *noticed* than the form of words in question admits. "I" am not separate reals; such reals, as stated, are separate, and, if separate, not a conscious series at all. It is needless to enlarge on this error, which is now generally repelled. We have simply to adequate propositional thinking to the facts. There is surely a series to be reckoned with. *But there is unity in this series, and some attempt must be made to think it.* It is not enough to concede that this unity appears; it is of importance that its nature, if possible, should be clearly grasped.

#### CONSCIOUSNESS IS INSEPARABLE FROM "ITS" CONTENT

§ 4. Different "perceptions," to use Hume's phraseology, are "distinguished"; but we have to add—within a Whole. "Sensations," "presentations," "impressions," "ideas," "volitions," "emotions," etc., are terms which should mean not separate entities, but aspects or phases of a *continuum*—THE FINITE CENTRE.

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise*, iv. § 6. "Perception," as used by Hume, is a word covering all modes of consciousness, inward and outward alike.



Regard a landscape, and select for your attention a sensible quality, say "this green"; note carefully how it is presented, and you will find the theory of its "separateness" literally denied. Note yet more carefully its setting, and, lo! the Centre, the entire given of consciousness, fading at its edges into the sub-conscious, emerges into view. The unity of consciousness is thus no conceptual figment, but felt. And in the face of this appearance, abstraction-entities such as "sensations" or "ideas" must be dismissed. What is present is a changeful Whole clearly conscious at a focus, but passing into the sub-conscious beyond this point. The bare *Flux* of the sceptics is preposterous myth. There is no flux apart from content, and there is no content which is not in, and of, the Whole. And the Whole, as we saw, is more or less conscious; but here, again, we must make no mistake. Consciousness is not a statically existent real, now occupied and now vacated by "states." Conscious process rises, like an "aiguille," out of a sea of cloud—out of the sub-conscious—and as thus rising shows as no "*pure Ego*," but just as the form in which varied content is revealed. There is suggested a sub-conscious struggle for emergence, for heightened intensity of life. Only content which, in virtue of its associates or its intrinsic strength, breaks out of the felt mass becomes clearly conscious, thrusting upon us the keen awareness of waking life. Here, as elsewhere, we shall detect that strife which, as Heracleitus used to aver, is the Father of Things.

## INCIDENTALLY WE REJECT VARIOUS MYTHS

§ 5. Consciousness being inseparable from content, a good many mythological phantasms have to go.



Thus the unalterable "I," as we have seen, disappears, for content shows flux; the merely simple "I" is absurd, for content is complex.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the *merely* Unitary "I," also the "I" which is *bare* identity, disappear; the content shows plurality and difference. Again, the *Substantial Self*, of the traditional "unknowable" type, shares the same fate. Content cannot either hold or attest it. In discrediting this surd, we reject what is admittedly unknown: a verbal fiction to be placed in the conceptual world. A "substance" or "essence" unable to appear in sentient experience is nonsense. The fiction has its worth in the sphere of thought, serving as a foil whereby the truth shows in better relief. And having said this, I have said all that is requisite. There is *process*, we may feel sure, behind the threshold of what is called the "normal" conscious life. Nay, the "amphibian" life of the "soul" taught by Plotinus<sup>2</sup> is not improbably a genuine and highly important fact. But process in the background must be co-essential with process which we already know. An occult Substance explains nothing, and the assertion that it exists outside philosophers' heads is one which cannot by any possibility be verified.

#### ARE APPEARANCES, STRICTLY SPEAKING, "MY" POSSESSIONS?

§ 6. I have made mention of appearances which are "my" possessions. I have suggested, withal, that this characterisation leaves more to be said. Pending, however, more adequate characterisation, let us ask

<sup>1</sup> "Whatever is merely or abstractly simple without complexity is a dead thing" (Hegel).

<sup>2</sup> *Enneads*, vi.



what is implied in calling the appearances "mine." Appearances seem to well up in a closed circle; and, so far as inquiry has yet carried us, I, and I alone, am implicated with this said circle. So far, so good. But it is becoming clear that some obscurity invests this word "I." It can be used as meaning the *entire finite Centre*; and it can be used as meaning only an important appearance *within* this Centre. And here I will advert to a remark made during our consideration of Method (Part I. Chap. I. § 25). There has been a development within the Centre, and the study of this development may often furnish useful clues. A question of genesis is involved, and, if we ignore this, we cannot grapple satisfactorily with the problem in hand.

THE "I," IF WE MEAN BY IT THE INWARD (SUBJECTIVE) SELF, DOES NOT OWN THE CENTRE.

§ 7. If "the Thing that calls itself 'I'" means the entire finite centre, then clearly all appearances within this "Thing" are mine. But if the "Thing" means the Empirical Self, that is to say Inward or Subjective, as contrasted with Outward, Experience, then the Centre contains appearances which I am in touch with, but do not *possess*.

There have been idealists who laid undue stress on Self taken as identical with "Mind." Appearances, they urge, are just property which this Self owns. The contention is discredited as follows:—(1) This inward Self does not *exhaust* the Centre, but appears beside other content within it; (2) is not primary. There was a stage when the Centre did not comprise the Self-not-Self, Mind-World, contrast at all. The

appearances then flowing through the Centre preceded the very birth of the inward self. In fine, this Self is less than the Centre, and stands on a slow development which took place within it.

I will now deal with these points at greater length.

(a) THE INWARD SELF OR SUBJECT DOES NOT  
EXHAUST THE CENTRE

1. The empirical self is discussed popularly as a fixed, stable Entity—as “that which” knows, wills, and has emotions. This conception of a changeless Entity subserves certain needs—is a useful invention, but one certainly untrue to fact. “Il ne s’agit pas de connaître mais, d’imposer au chaos assez de régularité . . . . pour satisfaire notre besoin pratique.”<sup>1</sup> There is *process* on the “Self” side of the Centre, and this process subsists in a relativity—relativity with that “other” side, the not-self or Object. Subject and Object (or, as I spoke of them in my last work, Mind and Object<sup>2</sup>) are changeful, mutually constitutive opposites. If you overlook this truth, lay stress on an abstract Subject or Mind and lodge the Object in it, psychological idealism or even solipsism results. This is the error combated by Kant in that “Refutation of Idealism” (in the second edition of the *Critique*) which Schopenhauer misunderstands and ascribes to ignoble motives.<sup>3</sup> Psychological idealism makes Mind or the Subject-side the possessor of experience. But the

<sup>1</sup> Gaultier on Nietzsche’s treatment of the Categories.

<sup>2</sup> I discussed this pair as grounded in a Monad. I am no longer arguing towards Monadism, but it will be some time before the new view comes to light. *Festina lente!*

<sup>3</sup> Kant merely points out, somewhat obscurely, that our inward experience is only possible through outward experience.

situation justifies no partiality of this sort. The Subject-side appears in, but does not exhaust, experience. There are not even special kinds of content ear-marked for Subjective or Objective note. . . . "Well-nigh everything contained in the psychical individual may be at one time part of the self and at another time part of the not-self."<sup>1</sup> We shall find this truth stand out more prominently as we proceed. Meanwhile, enough has been said in respect of our immediate end. The Self is an aspect or attitude within the Centre. It cannot own the Centre, because it is not all that is there.

(β) THE INWARD SELF IS NOT PRIMARY, BUT IS  
DEVELOPED WITHIN THE CENTRE

2. The Self, again, is developed within the Centre. The differencing of Subject and Object seems to be preceded, not by a blank, but by a neutral stage. This stage is not sensational in the usual sense of the word. "Sensations" are abstractions peculiar to an advanced consciousness that thinks, and, at this level, neither thinking nor thought-about obtain. Here content flows as an undiscriminated Whole; it shows bare confused presentedness—a chaos to be followed by cosmos anon. The rise of Subject and Object may be relatively quick, and in the cases of many creatures probably is. But all depends on the conditions—on the character of the flowing content and the struggle of the phases which this content includes. And if the flow of content is too transitory or too poor, this differencing cannot begin at all. It may begin, again, without being carried very far. In the case of man it begins slowly, and may be carried very far. The

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 94.

initial stages, it is probable, are these. There is suggested (a) a primitive confused presentedness,<sup>1</sup> but a presentedness that comes *whole*. This presentedness is not subject or object, but the mother-stuff in, and of, which these distinctions are made. (b) An aspect stands out of the presentedness. This, in virtue of its strength, has special "awareness," and, emerging against the background of the Centre, is *felt*. Consciousness belongs to content. In contrast with this intruder, the residual territory of the Centre is what *feels*; here lies the subdued, undiscriminated content which backs, invests, and frames the felt. *The dominant aspect is the prototype of the Object*<sup>2</sup>; *the subdued content, that of the Subject*. The Subject thus heralded is not a knowing "Medium." It is the twilight realm of the Centre, over against which special contents become clear. And the rudimentary Subject and Object will be remade from moment to moment; their realms lacking sharp frontiers and their content varying as content dictates.

### THE "PERMANENT" INWARD SELF

But it is a far cry from this rudimentary Subject to what is meant by the Permanent Empirical Self. This latter transcends present feeling, and claims to endure. It looks backwards and forwards into realms past and future. It implies memory and expectation, phases more or less continuous, and likenesses which these

<sup>1</sup> Mill's Neutrum.

<sup>2</sup> "Object" is a term which can be applied (1) to any sort of appearance, *e.g.* an emotion or image, which stands over against the Subject; and (2) more narrowly, to the special sort of appearance which we class as an "outward," "external," or "natural object." It is important to avoid confusion here. Cf. Chap. V. § 8, on Schopenhauer and the Categories.



phases show. In order to this development, a relatively advanced level of *representation* is requisite. A reflex consciousness of this Self comes long after the sense-world has settled into shape. And what happens in the individual is necessarily echoed in the history of the race. "Man regarded himself as an object before he learnt to regard himself as a subject; and hence the 'objective cases of the personal, as well as of the other pronouns, are always older than the subjective,' and the Sanskrit *mám, ma* (Greek  $\mu\epsilon$ , Latin *me*), is earlier than *aham* ( $\epsilon\gamma\acute{\omega}\nu$  and *ego*)."<sup>1</sup> Nay, it is probable that in most men the empirical self is still, to some extent, overshadowed by the not-self: the way in which plain men are wont to identify themselves with their *bodies* attests this.

The self, then, is no occult entity beyond the stars: no veiled substance known, as the absurd legend imports, to be unknown. And, again, it is more than the bare unity of an experient Centre. It has a content; for consciousness and content do not exist apart. It is reality that lies *within* appearance. It is no static reality, withal, for it shows change. Its life displays process; while it is felt or taken, in a practically effective way, also, to endure. The last state of a self cannot possibly mirror its first; nevertheless it must hang together with and resemble it in such wise that no abrupt break or radical unlikeness shall exist. This hanging together and likeness imply Memory or "retentiveness"; that is to say, not merely a presentative, but a *presentative-representative*, Now. Nothing that has been recurs, but the "specious" Now is other than what it would have been had no Nows gone before. Memory is obviously presupposed.

<sup>1</sup> Farrar, *Origin of Language*, p. 99.

When I say that I who write am the "same" person who was on *skis* yesterday, toured in Italy last summer, and had a tooth out fifteen years ago, I assert what is called the "permanent" empirical Self. And, in asserting it, I aver that, though this "permanent" has changed, it remains nevertheless in some respect or respects the same. Now in what respect or respects is it the same? Change is so obvious that I am at first at a loss what reply to make; the vaguely felt "respects" are not to become clear without an effort. The Subject-side of the subject-object relation is obscure; while the Object-side, by its nature, shows bright. It is easy to notice what was *known* yesterday, or even years ago; but it is not so easy to enter the penetralia of what is supposed to *know*.

I say "supposed," for the Subject-side is not a knowing "Medium" at all: nothing more than content which appears *along with* objective content in the Centre. And ordinarily this content is subdued, tending to lapse into undiscriminated confusedness such as that with which consciousness begins. If you desire to feel it clearly, you attend to it, discriminate and analyse its aspects, and so make *objects* of what was previously confused subjective blur. Psychologists are generally agreed as to the main character of this content. "The central part of the *me*," observes James, "is the feeling of the body and of the adjustments in the head; and in the feeling of the body should be included that of the general emotional tones and tendencies, for at bottom these are but the habits in which organic activities and sensibilities run." I incline to supplement this rendering, but a discussion of this psychological character would take us too far. Suffice it to note the part which these feelings, whether

supplemented or unsupplemented, play. They are of a more or less constant character, changing normally with extreme slowness, and, what is of vital moment, they are always present. It is in respect of this more or less uniform core that the phase of the Self now concerned with writing is said to be the "same" as the phases which enjoyed the touring and suffered the pain of the tooth-drawing fifteen years ago. And if the body-feelings were changed abruptly, or if, again, retentiveness, *i.e.* memory in the widest sense of the term, were to fail, this self would be impaired or even wrecked. But the shattering of this *self* might be a mere incident within the CENTRE. The flow of appearance would continue, and finally a new personality might arise to replace the old. This arising of a new personality is a familiar medico-psychological fact.

§ 8. In discussing the psychological basis of the Self, we have left over various important issues which demand immediate notice. We have to deal more fully with the problem of the Centre of experience, in which the self and not-self alike arise.

#### THE "WHOLENESS" OF THE CENTRE

There is nothing mysterious in the manner in which I come to regard the self-phases as "essentially" the "same." The *re*-cognition of the Self is no more remarkable than the *re*-cognition of "red." There is a presentative-representative content, and there is awareness of like features of this. Still, but for the character of the Centre no awareness of this nature could obtain. *We cannot get forward without once more emphasising the WHOLENESS in which sentiency comes—a wholeness which precedes, supports, and invests self and not-self whenever and however these*



*twain are apperceived.* An historical reference seems apposite. Students of Mill will recall a difficulty which that thinker notes during his analysis of the Self. Mill is desirous of explaining the Self on the lines of association of unit-elements of feeling. But he finds that there is an *inexplicable tie* which obtains between feelings—a tie as real as the feelings themselves, something common to them all—and he falls back on an “Ego,” of which, however, he affirms nothing save permanence and the feelings which it has, has had, and, under certain conditions, will have.<sup>1</sup> Well, this “tie” is not that of belonging to a *Transcendent* “Ego.” It is to be found in the nature of the *actual phenomenal Centre*, the content of which comes, not as irrelative discretetes, but as a Whole. Feelings are not unit-elements, but aspects of this continuous Whole. And, however these aspects struggle and stand out within the Whole, they never, while I am conscious of them, escape from it. If, ignoring the Whole, you talk of unit-elements, you at once make the simplest percept as “inexplicable” as the empirical self. Your proposition “this recognition is separate feelings” is too absurd to admit of mending. There is only one way out of the fix. You must recur to experience and frame a proposition more adequate to the real which appears

<sup>1</sup> But having got thus far, he cannot at will cry halt. The upshot of Mill's view is the wrecking of associationist atomism. Thus he not only accepts an “Ego,” but in one place (*Exam. of Hamilton*) suggests that succession may be a quality which is added to feelings: I have urged elsewhere that it follows that the law of Contiguous Association—that bulwark of his psychology—depends for its working on this Ego. All show of Atomism, of association coupling unit-elements, goes by the board (*Riddle*, p. 187). Having once admitted the “Ego,” you must *use* it! It is not a curio to be put away in a cupboard.



therein. Only propositions which can be "taken as" reality are true. Notice, then, the manner in which reality comes. You will discover that you yourself have created the problems which now affright. You have put asunder what reality presents as joined. And having done this, you are unable to bring together your conceptual discretetes once more. This is the head and front of your offending. Your procedure had been faulty from the outset. The enigma of the Self throws a fundamental error into special relief.

THE WHOLENESS IN QUESTION CAN BE FELT—  
DOES IT ATTEST A MONAD?

§ 9. This "wholeness" of sentiency is as much given as any aspect of it which we call a sensation or idea. It is revealed on the sides of Subject and Object alike; it forms the arena in which these mutually implicated opposites arise. It is this Whole, again, which embraces the relatively permanent content over against which Change is perceived. All contents flow, but not with equal rapidities, and never apart. This Whole escapes notice just because ordinary practical and even theoretic needs do not waft attention this way. Still, there is experience in which this Whole can be revealed as such: a super-relational awareness or *Whole-Feeling*, realisable when partial attentions lapse and content floats more or less together into view. It is then that a Wordsworth kicks the walls of his room, with intent (as the world looms upon and mingles with the "me") to make the subject-object relation more secure. It is then that a Schopenhauer descries differences as merged in the pervasive unity of the "Will." It is then that a Fichte finds himself apparent in things,

"broken into countless diversified shapes, as the morning sun, broken up in a thousand dew-drops, sparkles towards itself." This Whole-Feeling is genuine fact; at the same time it is certain that theoretical interpretations of it do not agree. And there is an issue of the last importance which confronts us here. Is there a *Monad* shining through this unitary complex of Subject and Object? Now make no mistake in this matter. You have arrived at the parting of the ways. If you want a system of Monads, you must begin by establishing a Monad, in fact *your* Monad, at this point. If there is a Monad behind and in your experience, then you may go on to argue that Monads are manifesting in other quarters as well. But if *your* Monad is mythical, then it will be idle to look for Monads elsewhere. Having already advanced one form of Monadism, I may be expected to fight under this banner again. But I must sacrifice previous convictions on the altar of truth. I can no longer aver that my *experience* reveals a Monad. And turning to *theory*, I notice that plural Monads hardly work with that smoothness which is to be desired. When we try to interrelate these Monads, we wander hopelessly in mazes of involved thought; weaving speculative fancies aloof from all verifiable basis in fact. I do not propose to enter at length into the difficulties which Monadism creates. It will be better to work slowly towards a more adequate and verifiable rendering of the facts.

#### MONADISM GETS RID OF AN OCCULT SUBSTANCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

§ 10. There is one point, however, on which stress should be laid. The Monad is satisfactory in one

important regard. It is no surd, no occult "substance" of consciousness, no unknown Thing-in-itself in which the so-called "attributes" of consciousness are stuck. It is an eternal individual substance of which the fundamental nature is held to be known. Thus the Leibnitzian Monad—a *vis representativa*, a simple holding the composite in itself—is supposed to contain virtually all that it actually becomes. Consciousness contains content which reveals what the Monad is "in itself." Consciousness, in other words, is the *illuminated portion* of the Monad. That which appears forms one tissue with that which does not appear. There is no appearance which does not manifest the monadic "essence" or "substance"; and, again, there is nothing in the "essence" which cannot appear. Monadist theory has changed much since Leibnitz wrote. The Monad has been stripped of most of its wealth, of most of the universe which, according to the "Monadology," is reflected in its mirror; "pre-established harmony" is dead, and theories which seek to interrelate the Monads have been proffered. According to Herbart, my Monad in its positive, changeless character is unknown; its passing phenomenal content springs from its relations with other monads. Still this character is of the same nature as appearances, hence the Herbartian system, while somewhat mechanically conceived, cannot be alleged to repose on surds. It is not without a purpose that I emphasise this exclusion of surds. We here are not, indeed, arguing towards Monads. But we shall treat of the same depths which the Monadists have discussed amiss. Supplementation of directly known appearance is requisite. Such supplementation is to let occult substances and "unknowable" ultimates severely alone. It is through



appearance that we have to descry, of course dimly and darkly, the full nature of things. However we juggle with words, we can hap on no mother-stuff other than that which unfolds itself in sentient life.

#### THE CENTRE NOT ABOVE TIME AND SPACE

§ 11. The Finite Centre, as we have seen, is no playground of units, but presents content which comes undivided or as a whole. And the "wholeness" is not simply inferred; there is a Whole-Feeling or super-relational awareness answering thereto. We pass now to a further important consideration. However we propose to explain the Centre, we cannot regard it as above Time and Space. Its contents are changing at varying rates—that suffices for the issue of Time. And we must aver that any view which regards it as non-spatial is false. Nature, I presume, is extended; yet Nature appears *within* the object-consciousness of the Centre! And, as I have urged elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> even my representation ("idea") of a chair is an echo of what, in its first presentation, was extended, and as such is itself extended as well. Space can be abstracted from outward and inward experience alike. Could an alien knower be aware of my Centre, he would perceive its *contents* spatially, *i.e.* as they are. *The widely accepted theory of the soul as a non-spatial metaphysical point is absurd.* Is it urged that "consciousness," at least, is above space? But "consciousness" and "content" are not separable except in words. Consciousness does not "look at" or "survey" content which is foreign to itself. It is one with content, and, if you propose to house it in a "soul," you must, perforce, lodge the extended content there along with it.

<sup>1</sup> *Riddle* (1893), pp. 326-7. See also pp. 138-40 of this essay.



CONSCIOUSNESS AS THE ILLUMINATED PORTION OF  
THE CENTRE

§ 12. It is not difficult to suggest how the notion of a static "consciousness" arose. Contents come and go, while consciousness (with, however, significant periodical lapses) seems to endure. The situation is easily understood. Certain sorts of content are rapidly replacing old and rising on to the conscious level in the process, while a background of relatively permanent content, the nuclear mass of body-feeling, etc., maintains a more or less subdued awareness throughout. Let us note that consciousness shines brightly only in a small area of the Centre. There is a focal point, and away from this spot awareness shades off into the sub-conscious. Consciousness, when present, is inseparable from content—is the "form" in which experienced "matter" or content comes. But "matter" which takes on this form may be continuous with process that flows in the dark. It seems probable, indeed, that all that we know and call real streams forth, in last resort, from the SUB-CONSCIOUS.

Conscious experience is the *illuminated portion* of what we have called the finite Centre. Now in respect of "normal" human experience we seem able to detect one important accompaniment of this illumination. Consciousness concurs with a physiological happening which Romanes has called "ganglionic friction." Or, as Royce puts it, consciousness attends those processes which, "while involving the cortex, are of a decidedly complex grade and of a relatively hesitant character, or which come in consequence of the graver interferences on the part of the environment."

James concludes similarly that "all consciousness seems to depend on a certain slowness of the process in the cortical cells. The rapider currents are, the less feeling they seem able to awaken." There are terms in these statements that outrun our exposition, raising issues with which only the ensuing chapters can deal. But, not to commit ourselves too freely, there seems evidence enough to attest this:—Consciousness arises when processes, psychical but subconscious, attain a high degree of intensity: an intensity which, in our cases at least, is connected somehow with intense cell-life in the cortex. There is a mine of suggestion here, but we are not in a position to exploit it now. The problem of *body* is involved, and raises difficulties which we cannot ignore. Body is an object among objects, and the Riddle of External Perception has yet to be read. Unless we move cautiously, we shall find ourselves helplessly bogged.<sup>1</sup>

#### A RETROSPECT AND A PROSPECT

§ 13. Thus the problem of the Finite Centre remains on our hands. We have seen that content is not bare discretes, but comes whole; that consciousness is

<sup>1</sup> I append a remarkable illustration of the confusion which is possible. Various writers have urged that consciousness is a "side," result, function, or activity of body, despite their asseverations (in forgotten passages of their works) that body is just an appearance in consciousness! Bain, with his "guarded materialism" and his rejection of an Independent External World, is a notable offender in this respect (*cf.* my *Riddle*, pp. 190-2). My conscious life cannot, of course, be the "side" or activity of an object which exists only *within* it! Let men first clearly understand what they mean by "body," and then hold fast to this meaning during their entire wanderings, voluntary or involuntary, in metaphysics.

no independent witness, but is inseparable from this said content; that content may be lit by clear consciousness, show dimly in the twilight of the sub-conscious, or be continuous with process that is entirely dark. Consciousness is the form which activity below the conscious level may take. We agreed that the Changeless, the merely Simple, the merely Unitary Ego, and the Ego viewed as unknowable substance, are myth. Psychological idealism, we saw, is invalid. The empirical "mind" and "world" are distinctions *within* the Centre: distinctions preceded by Mill's Neutrum, at which stage only a confused feeling-complex obtains. There is a Whole-Feeling, or super-relational awareness, answering to the content-whole in which "mind" and "world" take their rise. This content-whole, again, might be lodged in a Monad; but Monadism is unsatisfactory, creating difficulties too grave to be overcome. Content, withal, implicates a mother-stuff which appears, or is manifested, in it. *If, however, this mother-stuff is not a Monad, what is it?* This is the consideration which is now looming large. Let us admit that the origin and standing of the Finite Centre are still far to seek. We have made progress, but we confront a problem which this chapter has failed to solve. We are now to broach issues, not only interesting in themselves, but vitally relevant to the reading of this outstanding riddle. The character of the final solution has been already dictated in part. No supplementation of appearances can annul what appearances show. This is something to go upon, but the main burden of constructive work lies ahead.

## CHAPTER III

### APPEARANCES AND THE EXTERNAL WORLD

WE ARE TO CONFRONT TWO LEADING ISSUES TOGETHER: THE RIDDLE OF EJECTS AND THE RIDDLE OF NATURE.

§ 1. MY Centre at this moment contains a fragment of what is called Nature or the External World—the multiform objectivity which looms with such marvelous richness of detail upon sense. And my *practical* beliefs go out to other Centres, which I credit with content of a similar kind. I have now to ask what theoretical grounds exist for accepting alien Centres, and what is the ultimate standing of the Nature, or Natures, so diversely apparent in them. The two questions must be confronted together. And, as before, we are to keep appearances steadily in view. Nature-philosophies which disdain (or indulge in high and dry “deductions” of) fact are absurd: pile words on words as you may, empiricism, as time shows, is the only wear. Again, “representative fictions” such as are used by physics and chemistry will not avail. We want, not working theories which convenience us by colligating fact, theories whose merit is that they enable us to calculate and predict, but propositions which are true of the live real as it is. So far as is possible we shall think in the presence of the



appearances to be discussed. The situation is such that our results will be very general; but they will, perhaps, redeem their character by taking up what we actually know.

### THE PROBLEM CONCRETELY STATED

§ 2. It is idle to discuss the perception of the External World, unless we keep a concrete case always in view.

The *Bise* has ceased to blow; the snow-storm that has raged these last two days and nights seems over. Already the sky shows blue above the mist-wreathed peak framed by my window. I cast aside the pen and go on to the balcony. Behind me rises the green-shuttered, broad-eaved front of the chalet, set on its knoll on the mountain-side high above the white valley. I am gazing over the buried garden at a landscape superbly fair. To my left, some fifty feet below, unsilenced by all that winter can do, speeds the torrent, hurrying under masses of ice and snow towards the lowlands. Beyond this, across a sunlit ridge crowned with pines, I sight a far glen ringed about by glittering peaks. To my right, clouds are rolling over a pass and its bounding heights. In front, and far below, lies the village, whence the tinkle of sleigh-bells comes pleasantly and crisply to the ear. Behind the village, again, shaggy with pines and faced with frosted cliffs, a rounded mountain-block, a very palace of Winter, looms monstrous and pitiless upon the valley. On the snow-slope below one cliff is a small black speck. The speck moves—it is a man, yes, a man on *skis*. Thought shifts from the charm of the outlook to the graver reflections

which hold us here. The Mountain and the speck: these prompt the inquiries which are to lead us to the desired goal. The Mountain stands for Nature; the speck, for the kind of object into which, rightly or wrongly, I "eject" a consciousness like my own. We have to consider how my Centre, the Nature which, in part, occupies it and the alien human Centres which I connect with this Nature, are related so as to form one tissue in a time-process serving to support my practical beliefs.

THERE IS NOTHING BETWEEN "KNOWER"  
AND "KNOWN"

§ 3. There is nothing between "knower" and "known." There is a finite Centre, certain aspects of which receive special notice. And the stuff of which the External World is made is of one piece with that of which inner experience consists. The Mountain and the idea of it belong to the *illuminated* portion of a Whole—the undivided Feeling-Whole in which I live and have my being. Though "outward" and "inward" differ in important respects, they agree on the fundamental count of appearing as content within the Centre. And, in indicating their origin and standing, we must avoid fictions of the nature of occult ultimates or surds. Thus an *unknowable* soul-substance, as we saw, must be condemned. And, on the other side, Nature-philosophy must reject *unknowable* things-in-themselves. Experience supplies nothing which can be called wholly unknown. An alleged consciousness, definite or indefinite, direct or inferred, of an Unknowable or unknowables, is nonsense. What I am conscious of falls at once into the region of the known. Whether it be clear or

obscure, whether it be intuited, imagined, or barely conceived, it belongs to experience, is a content with a more or less determinate character of its own. To regard it as unknown is absurd. Do you urge that it may *stand for* unknowable things-in-themselves? You are framing hypotheses of the unverifiable sort. To verify this statement you must, in the end, point to appearances, actual or possible, with which it agrees. Unknowables, of which I cannot even say legitimately "they exist," are mere words.

#### AGNOSTICISM MUST BE SET ASIDE

I am compelled, then, at the outset of this inquiry to set agnosticism aside. A complete Nature-philosophy will assuredly compel me to supplement the appearances which I find in my Centre. The supplementation, however, must posit nothing fundamentally alien in character to what is known. Those who deride metaphysics, and talk loudly of observation and induction, may be invited to weigh this statement well. There is no "transcendentalism" here: on the contrary, I have espoused *the only view for which an empirical justification can be found*. The noticing of appearances in *this* Centre is the only way of approach towards the wider Real. Appearances must be supplemented on the lines which appearances dictate. Is, then, an idealistic theory of the universe compulsory? To assert this would carry us too far. Idealism is of many kinds, and it is far from clear what sort of idealism we are likely to adopt. The upshot, if I may hazard the remark, will, not improbably, be a theory which can be called Realistic and Idealistic at once.

## THE PLAIN MAN AND THE MOUNTAIN

§ 4. It will conduce to a clear understanding of our problem if we consider some of the ways in which folk regard the Mountain. The plain man tells us that it exists "outside of mind." We must allow that the Mountain is not a mental or subjective fact. The notion that the Mind can "transport its sensations out of itself and spread them, as it were, over a substance to which they cannot possibly belong" (d'Alembert) is a superstition which cannot be too strongly denounced. "Mind" owns no sensations which can be projected into external being. It is a name for inward experience, is no entity, but a distinction within the Centre: a distinction slowly developed out of the neutrum of presentedness from which both it and Nature (for us) arise. Outward reality emerges along with (is not *inferred* into position by) Mind. Sensations, again, are abstractions, and are not present when the Centre-history begins. Objectivity—objects—ways of acting and being of objects—object-attributes—sensations: this is the psychological succession in fact. Objectivity, of course, stands not for a general idea, but for the concrete, indefinite, unanalysed *That*—the confused given which opposes itself to the residual content of the Centre (Part II. Chap. II. § 7 (2)). Objects are evolved later, and sensations, which imply reflective attention to aspects of the said objects, last of all.<sup>1</sup> Kant's "Refutation of Idealism," or rather psychological idealism, to which I have adverted already, is directed against the view which takes external reality as Mind-made, and, consequently, as not *immediately*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part II. Chap. V. § 8, "The Passage of Objectivity into Objects."



known. His works, in the main, constitute a literature of Power, not of Knowledge, having served to promote vigorous discussions rather than to instruct. But in the present instance he has made a valuable contribution to knowledge. Internal presupposes external experience. The supposed *inference to Externality* belongs to myth. The consciousness of the appearances called "things" is just as immediate as that of the appearances called "ideas."

The Mountain, then, is not "an idea";<sup>1</sup> the External World is not appearance in the Internal. Failure on the part of certain idealists to grasp this truth called forth the confused protests of Reid and Hamilton, and the effective, but sadly misconstrued, rejoinder of Kant. The latter was accused of renouncing the idealism taught in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and that in deference to the clamour of the crowd. He does no more, in fact, than bring his original teaching into the light. Inward and outward rest on the same evidence—the consciousness of them. And but for the felt objective reality of things a full consciousness of the changing empirical self would not arise. So far, then, we are with the plain man, but difficulties are now certain to arise. The plain man, if pressed, will make a further statement something like this: *The Mountain exists just as perceived, whether he or anyone else be aware of it or not.* And this kind of statement, excellent, of course, for practice, outruns the evidence. The first and most obvious difficulty flows from the fact that different percipients perceive different mountains—different both numerically and in respect of quality, but which, for practical convenience, are *taken as the*

<sup>1</sup> "All things are our ideas" (Berkeley).

"same." The mountain of the myopic man yonder is certainly unlike that of my friend. Which, then, of the two mountains persists when unperceived? The answer will be: Well, perhaps the Mountain in itself differs from the mountains perceived; still, there is "something there" which supports the *symbols* which these percipients confront. This "something" may be left undetermined, or regarded as "dynamic," "extended mass," etc. But the plain man will resolutely assert that it is "*there*." At this stage criticism will, perhaps, trouble him again. The Mountain, as presentative-representative complex, is admittedly no mere mental fact. *Still, it is revealed within the Centre, which is the field of inward and outward experience alike.* It is real for the consciousness of the Centre (or Centres), and has its place, so far as the evidence yet adduced goes, nowhere else. How, then, can it be real in any form when the Centre is not conscious of it at all? A "something" independent of the Centre has been mentioned, but to what does this suggestion amount? The independent "something" is clearly not presented, and may, consequently, be a mere conception or thought! The plain man has now had his fill of metaphysics, and retires. We have noted his perplexity: we may be within hail of a solution in which his perplexity should disappear.

#### THE PHYSICIST AND CHEMIST BEFORE THE MOUNTAIN —THE FALLACY OF MATERIALISM

§ 5. The student of Molar and Molecular Physics and the Chemist are prone, like the plain man, to believe in the independent Something, and they incline, often, to make more or less definite assertions

as to what it is. Mechanically conceived theories are usually preferred. It was once, indeed, the rule to discuss Nature as a Mechanism, not merely for the working purposes of science, but in the supposed interest of truth. But it is one thing to treat the Mountain, for practical ends, *as if it were* only mechanical; it is another, and quite a different, thing to assert roundly and categorically, "*It is so.*" If you say "It is so," you will be opposed by all inquirers whose specialism has been leavened with philosophy. You will be talking not science, but metaphysics, and, unfortunately, a metaphysics which is at once unconscious and crude. A mechanical metaphysics thrives still in many quarters, but it has no longer a claim to be regarded as serious thought. It founds on *convenient fictions* which man seems to construct, almost instinctively, for his *use*. Thus "Matter" is not, as was once held, an absolute existent, but is a denizen of the conceptual world, and, so far from containing, as an enthusiastic physicist once declared,<sup>1</sup> "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," shows Extension and Inertia as its entire wealth. That which, filling space, resists or imparts movement can be brought under the concept and labelled Matter. And Force? "A certain variable quality of matter (the rate of its change of motion) is found to be invariably connected with the position relatively to it of other matter, considered as expressed in terms of this position, the quality is Force" (Clifford).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tyndall.

<sup>2</sup> Thought along with represented muscular feelings (such as happen when *my body* resists or imparts movement) this abstraction seems vivified into a Power that dominates "matter." We are to use, and not to be enslaved by, this fiction. It is remarked by Hegel that "it is often said that the nature of Force itself is unknown, and that its outputting or exertion only is appre-



Such conceptual creations are invaluable in their proper, *i.e.* practical, sphere. But, not infrequently, they and their like are advanced as *revelatory* of Nature, or even the Universe. And this way, one must affirm frankly, lies confused thinking, nay folly. "Purely mechanical phenomena do not exist . . . . are abstractions, made either intentionally or from necessity, for facilitating our comprehension of things. . . . The science of mechanics does not comprise the foundations, no, nor even a part of the world, but only an aspect of it" (Mach).<sup>1</sup> The old-time Materialism, which relied on "Force" and "Matter," is an extreme and very crude extension of the mechanical view. It is a theory which has inspired excellent work, and its votaries have fought long and valiantly in the service of liberal thought. Proffered, however, as metaphysics, *i.e.* as a complete theory of appearance, it is sheer nonsense. Its fundamental error has already been laid bare (Part I. Chap. II., § 19). It lies in the *mis*-taking of phases of Reality (to wit, certain notions in the restricted *conceptual* world) for the expanse of Reality as a whole. Having indicated the character of this error, we shall have no call to consider the issue again.

It were madness, of course, to contend that the hended. But . . . all that is specified as contained in Force is the same as what is specified in the Exertion, and the explanation of a phenomenon from a Force is to that extent a mere tautology. What is supposed to remain unknown, therefore, is really nothing but the empty form of reflection-into-self, by which alone the Force is distinguished from the Exertion—and that form is every whit as well known. It is a form that does not make the slightest addition to the content and to the law, which have to be discovered from the phenomenon alone" (*Logic of Hegel*, p. 213).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hegel on the Category of Mechanism, *Logic of Hegel* (Doctrine of the Notion), p. 291.



mechanical treatment of Nature is nothing worth. Its success has been striking. It subserves practice, and, considered in this regard, justifies itself. It favours simplicity and sweeping generalisation; it conveniences vastly the mathematicians, furthers prediction, and enables non-mathematical folk to view things together in a compendious, though very partial and one-sided, way. But we must be careful to recall that mathematico-mechanical theories hold no mirror up to Nature. As William James so well puts it, they "are all translations of sensible experiences into other forms, substitutions of items between which ideal relations of kind, number, form, equality, etc., obtain, for items between which no such relations obtain; coupled with declarations that the experienced form is false and the ideal form true, declarations which are justified by the appearance of new sensible experiences at just those times and places at which we logically infer that their ideal correlates ought to be. Wave-hypotheses thus make us predict rings of darkness and colour, distortions, dispersions, changes of pitch in sonorous bodies moving from us, etc.; molecule-hypotheses lead to predictions of vapour-density, freezing-point, etc.—all of which predictions fall true."<sup>1</sup>

This reconstruction of Nature is welcome, because it works.<sup>2</sup> And in the eyes of a plain man it has an added charm: it tends to show not only as a practical success, but as truth. For the plain man, when he begins to think, usually regards the "primary" qualities (modes of Extension and Inertia) of per-

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 669 (Macmillan).

<sup>2</sup> Such expressions as "the electro-magnetic radiation which constitutes light," etc., could hardly be tolerated but for this fact.

ceived objects as *peculiarly real*. It is easy to understand how this belief comes to exist. In the struggle, as it were, of aspects of objects for notice, the more stable and practically important will prevail. Thus the Mountain, viewed as extended mass, seems to endure, while its colours, temperatures, sounds, smells, and a mob of "secondary" aspects come and go with the process of the months and even hours. And if the Mountain has to be climbed, interest in the "primary" aspects will be insistent indeed! At a certain stage, then, of mental growth the primary qualities stand out so impressively as to overshadow the rest. Mechanics, as the first of the physical sciences, was built on the *partial attention* of plain men who were beginning to think. The Mountain was noticed, in a receptual rather than conceptual way, as extended mass, and anon, seeing that pieces could be detached from it, was regarded as made up of indefinitely numerous and very small masses, which, to account for observed processes of *becoming*, were held to move. Difficulties, of course, were in waiting; but, given motions sufficiently complicated, anything in reason was to be got out of them! A psychological fate evolved mechanical thinking long ere the philosophers and mathematicians, who made it quantitative and exact, had their say. *Defective apperception of qualities made Nature seem less than it is*. And when, to-day, mechanical thinking is not restricted to practice, but invades metaphysics, it is always this same defect of attention which is at fault.

#### THE FALLACY OF SIMPLICITY

Simplicity of the mechanical sort, in view of certain ends, is certainly to be desired. But the *Fallacy of*

*Simplicity* marks an extreme which we have to avoid. A purely mechanical Nature-philosophy, such as that of Descartes, has no worth for metaphysics at all. In sober seriousness, Nature—the Mountain—is at least as complex and rich as my developed object-consciousness reveals it to be. Indeed, the Mountain comprises the sentimental and emotional aspects with which it comes. As presented, “it looms monstrous and pitiless upon the valley,” and we must even take in more content if we are to record the complete fact.<sup>1</sup> But, waiving this point, let us observe that the usually recognised “primary” and “secondary” qualities are intertwined. The truth-seeker has no call to hypostatise obtrusive or arbitrarily selected kinds of qualities wherewith to “explain” the rest. All the qualities rest on the same empirical evidence—appearance in a conscious Centre. Psychical process is such that a mechanical way of regarding Nature is, at a certain stage of human thinking, enforced. And various scientific inquirers, finding this idea of Mechanism of great use, work it, and with dazzling success, for all it is worth. *It comes, perhaps, as a shock later to find that the mechanical qualities are never given pure and undefiled.* Take visual extension as present in the Mountain. It is simply the manner in which colours, light and shade, appear. Annul the so-called “secondary” filling, and the extension—a quite unimaginable abstraction—also disappears. “Movement,” “mass,” “solidity,” “force,” “impact,” etc., are all similarly impure. We have to realise that we cannot assert truly that a *merely* mechanical world is ever perceived. The “primary” and “secondary” qualities are only *aspects* of Nature—mutually implicated aspects only isolated in conceptual thought. And

<sup>1</sup> Hence, indeed, the saying, “Un paysage est un état d’âme.”

Nature, again, as I know it, is just a tract of *experience* within a conscious Centre.

The Fallacy of Simplicity places a simplified mechanical Nature behind the indefinitely complex sensible Nature that I know. And often this simplified Nature has been held, though at the cost of grotesque difficulties, to "explain" even the experient Centre wherein complex sensible Nature appears. The history of this device is, for metaphysics, its condemnation. All mechanical explanations of the Real must, in virtue of their origin, be inadequate—must be altogether too narrow and one-sided, in view of the end which we have to pursue. We shall advert, incidentally, to examples of such explanation anon. But the shadow-land of Mechanism, in which we have lingered awhile, has been rated at its worth, and is now once and for all to be left behind.

Some account might be given of how the folk classed as "idealists" view the Mountain. The ground to be covered, however, would be very considerable, and it will be better, perhaps, if we proceed to decide the issue for ourselves.

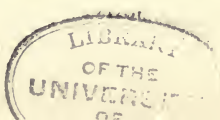
#### ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IDEAS AND EXTERNAL OBJECTS

§ 6. Nature, then, as I know it, wells up within, and not without, the Centre. Its exact frontiers escape my ken, and the truth is that no such definite boundaries exist. Thus there is always ideal amplification or supplementation of the sensible appearances which I momentarily confront. Nature is



not a presentative, but a presentative-representative, arrangement—a construct which looms indefinitely, if vaguely, larger than the sensible flux. There is no sharp dividing line between sensible appearances and the sphere of “Mind.” It is clear, however, that sensible appearances, plainly recognised as such, have their mark. The Mountain which I have *perceived* differs from the mountain which I *imagine* anon. In what does this difference consist? Both Mountains are emphatically real: *esse*, in their regard at least, is *sentiri*. The perceived Mountain is real in what is called a physical sense, *i.e.* in connection with co-existences and sequences which affect my body. The imagined Mountain cannot, indeed, be climbed by this body, but it is real, withal, in its own sphere, the world of imagination or dream, and were it not so I could not now be discussing it at all. Both mountains, again, are experience-content: they exist for me as they are felt, and are felt as they exist. Both, again, are extended (Part II. Chap. II. § 11) and show colours<sup>1</sup>—white snow, grey crags, dark pines, brown grass whence the snow has slipped, etc.—though I note that what is perceived happens in this case to be livelier and richer in content than what is imagined. Both are amplified by “associated” feelings of resistance, etc., so that what is primarily a visual fact is felt also as more. And both alike are peculiar to the Centre of experience which has evolved “me.” So far, then, I have not reached the features which part external object and idea.

<sup>1</sup> It was long ago pointed out by d’Alembert (the passage cited by Hamilton in the *Lectures*, giving trouble later to Mill) that the having of different colours carries with it the perception of extension. The colours of the imagined mountain bound one another in an entirely spatial way.



The time-worn opposition of extended objects and unextended ideas has been dismissed. The attempt to couple up outward objects with our "active or moving energies"<sup>1</sup> must be rejected as well. This view regards the colouring of the Mountain as "not properly an object fact": the colours must be "conjoined" with presentations or representations of movement (muscular sensibility) before they become objective. I reply that colouring, even as present to a babe, would already be objectivity, however crude. There are no primitive "subject-states" from which objectivity is extruded into spurious being (Part II. Chap. II. § 7). And I presume that there may obtain Centres whose object-worlds contain nothing akin to "attitudes of [muscular] energy" at all.

#### THE "COMMON INDEPENDENT" WORLD: A DIFFICULTY

I now observe that the "idea" is plastic, and that, to a certain extent, I can do with it what I like: play with it, modify it, vary its accompaniments, and dismiss it, when it tires me, at will. My power is limited, of course: changes take place in the image without my willing them, and even against my will, and occasionally such an image declines altogether to be dismissed. Still there is scope for direct modification, etc., which in the other case I do not possess. The perceived Mountain is thrust upon me in an arbitrary way. And events on and about the Mountain occur independently of what I desire. This independence—arbitrary, limiting, and intrusive—specially characterises the Mountain as contrasted with the image. But there is a further important feature

<sup>1</sup> Bain.

to be noticed. The Mountain is (practically) *the same for all percipients such as I*; given like conditions, like perceptions result. This belief, which is thrust on me, not by specific information, but by the behaviour of animate beings, renders the independence of the Mountain more notable still.<sup>1</sup> I am prone to believe now in a *common independent world*—in a matrix in which creatures like myself live, move, and have their being and connected life. Such a belief is vastly convenient, but there is a difficulty which suggests that it is hardly true. However *arbitrarily* objects appear, and however *alike* they may be for different Centres, still a really common, or shared, world is yet to be found. The Centres are many, and a “common world” seems an invention which, like that useful device the conceived “Thing,” is born from want.<sup>2</sup> The circle wherein Nature rises before me seems *closed*. *Quot homines tot mundi!* I have hardly reached the point whereat my practical belief and theoretical knowledge cease to collide.

#### HOW SHALL I PASS INTO AN ENVELOPING SYSTEM COMMON TO FINITE CENTRES?

§ 7. I am once more confronted with the old problem. The Centre, with its subjective and objective contents, seems a territory whence I cannot pass.

<sup>1</sup> It was observed by Fichte, “Only of that of which others testify to me do I know that it is not merely my (dream) world, but is the real world.” This is to say too much; but what remains certain is this. The testimony of *others* (*i.e.* of Ejects) is just as requisite for the full development of my objective world as it is for that of the permanent self.

<sup>2</sup> It is Gaultier who says so neatly, “L’objet nait du besoin.” On Unities as made both for us and by us, *cf.* Part II. Chap. VI. § 7.



Anyhow, Subjective Idealism is a spectre by no means laid. But perhaps there is a way out of the difficulty. The Centre may not be absolutely closed. The contents within it may be relative to a dynamic beyond—may point to a supporting Macrocosm wherein it lies. The Centre may *include* the workings of a wider domain—workings in virtue of which its alleged private experiences come as they do. The master-clue is, of course, Relativity (Part I. Chap. II. § 26). Practical beliefs, originated prior to reflective thought, prompt me to hold that “nothing is that’s single.” A theoretic support for these beliefs is now wanted. We are in search of the Enveloping System.

How is the passage into this System to be commenced? I propose, in the main, to adopt the procedure which characterised my last work.<sup>1</sup> I shall start from reasonings based on the reality of *alien* human Centres, reaching the System in a manner shortly to be explained. I shall then discuss this System with intent to suggest how the many Centres interact in a mother-stuff which is co-essential with themselves. And when something has been done to show on what general lines the riddle of Nature and persons must be solved, I shall proceed to discuss a number of implicated and very grave questions at which, as yet, we have not even glanced. Note that nothing more than the general lines of a solution will be traced. And take warning, also, that theoretical certitude is at an end. Even the passage to Ejects<sup>2</sup> of the human sort is not absolutely to be guaranteed

<sup>1</sup> *Riddle* (1893), pp. 306 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> An “Eject,” is an inferred alien consciousness based on the *ejecting* of a “me” into an object of perception, *e.g.* a human organism.



by rational proofs. Fichte himself came to see that, for theory, such Ejects are "specific modes of representation." In respect of the practical life there are psychical processes that serve me well: what is called "association" enforces belief in Ejects, and the practical situation is thereby saved. It is certain, however, that I am not directly aware of an alien Centre; there is an inference here which I cannot verify so fully as I do an inference to the softness or coldness of yon seen patch of snow. The conscious processes of a supposed alien self cannot, or rather do not, appear in my Centre. The case for Ejects, however, is so strong that I come to regard this difficulty as of no account. I take a minimal theoretical risk, because I can do nothing else. *If, however* (and this is a vital point), *I accept Ejects, I shall certainly have to accept much of the advanced metaphysics which is to follow.* I am to pass through the Eject into the Macrocosm. The ignoring of this way of research is the cardinal sin of the agnosticism which draws inspiration from Kant. The way is not without its difficulties, but it offers the prospect of approximately certain results: it conducts to a standpoint whereat great achievements of science, as yet unassimilated by philosophy, are caught up and remodelled in a larger view; and it furnishes a means whereby the place of the individual in the universe may, to some extent, be settled with satisfaction to all concerned. But of course here, as before, theoretic philosophy is impotent in one important respect. It cannot give the *immediate certitude* for which the mystics, religious and other, of all ages have asked. And its powerlessness is due to the basic limitations within which the human thinker lives, moves, and has his being. The human thinker has to get at *the* Universe through *his*

universe; he stands within a finite Centre of experience which has no really central and inclusive point of view. To know adequately one must intuit in a direct, whole, and undivided way. I shall make progress despite the narrowness of the area wherein I perceive and think. But, in the end, the "modes of representation" with which I construct the Macrocosm will give me pause. I shall ask, perhaps: "Is this way of getting at the wider real final? And, after all has been said that can be said, what certainty have I that this edifice of symbolic thinking is not a dream?" Well, in the solitude of the study I may sometimes surmise that even the Ejects, or supposed alien Centres, are no more than my thoughts. But scepticism on this head is futile, and is dispelled, indeed, by the first human face I see.<sup>1</sup> And, accepting Ejects, I can accept various additional metaphysical truths as almost equally beyond cavil. The mystics, and even a Schelling, may promise me richer fare. But promises are too often made to be broken. The way of "immediate cognition" is said to be quite impracticable for the profane. And the elect who claim to tread it have not as yet dazzled us with magnificent spoils. *Cultivons notre jardin*. Mankind, when nearing the goal of history, will enjoy, perhaps, the immediate cognition of which Schelling speaks. For the present, however, philosophy, analytic and synthetic, will serve our turn. It is able, at any rate, to furnish guidance; and those who have to act as well as think will do well, perhaps, not to cry for the moon.

<sup>1</sup> Descartes, however, went so far as to regard animals as machines devoid of consciousness. And certain Cartesians actually tortured beasts just to show how fully they accepted this view. This mischievous belief illustrates the fact that the verification of the alien Centre is never absolutely complete.

AM I SHUT UP WITHIN "MY" CENTRE?

§ 8. When I look at the Mountain (§ 2), I see on a snow-slope below one of its cliffs a "small black speck," which I recognise, after some hesitation, as a man. I believe that this man is conscious, and this belief, indispensable for practical life, comes to me set, as it were, in the visual perception itself. Inference of the deliberate sort is not present at all. When I seek to justify this belief as not only useful but true, I have to resort to conscious inference on the following lines:—The haunting object which I call my body is allied in a very close manner with all my other perceptions—in fact with the main stream of feelings, volitions, and cognitive attitudes. Certain happenings in this body precede, or concur with, my perceptions of external things, with my being in this or that mood, with my having such and such intentions, and so forth. Hence, when I perceive objects (*e.g.* human organisms) which are like my body and which behave, under like conditions, in like ways, I infer that they also resemble it in a respect which is not perceived: namely, in being allied with conscious experiences of willing, perceiving, etc. My procedure is natural, and may seem unquestionably correct. I am aware of bodies, and I ensoul these, on the evidence of certain marks, with conscious processes like my own. Such inferences are continually strengthened or "verified" by what the eject-endowed bodies happen later to do. Still the theoretic difficulty is plain. After all, the bodies, and what I attribute to them, appear in the circle of my own Centre. I never have a direct awareness, a genuine empirical grip, of an alien Centre. To attain this I should have to reach a level at which conscious beings are not closed circles, but



interlace! The universe may hold this lot in store for me, but assuredly I embrace no other conscious Centre now. If alien Centres obtain, they seem to do so in regions which fall outside my conscious life. There is for me nothing theoretically certain save the appearances, subjective and objective, which stand out against the background of my own Centre.

### THE SAVING PROPOSITION

I am now, however, becoming restive. Of course, anything and everything I can profess to know must appear in a manner within this Centre. Am I, then, cut off from a possible Enveloping System beyond it? Such a system, if it obtains, must be related to my sentient life. Is it to be discredited just because I can only know of it within my "closed" circle? I am plainly in a fix, and my drift towards solipsism must be arrested at once. The saving proposition may be stated thus. *It is not empirically known that the Centre is absolutely closed.* It is closed in this sense: namely, that the conscious processes of alien Centres, as they are for themselves, do not appear in it. But in another sense the Centre is open, perhaps, to all the winds that blow. Just consider the question in regard to the relativity towards it of an alien human Centre. Once again I find that there are frontiers which are far to seek. The alien Centre can be adjudged present wherever its activity works. If I must use a metaphor—the Sun is not merely travelling through the ether: it is also on the meadow, in the grass and leaves, nay, in the animal brain. The alien Centre does not transfer to me the conscious processes (a veritably closed tract) whereby it exists in its own right and for itself. But



these processes, again, do not exhaust its entire sphere. It is present, also, *wherever there is content relative to, and influenced by, the content which it consciously holds*. Thus the lover may be said to appear in the loved, though his conscious states are not transmitted as such. There is a further consideration apposite at this stage. So far, alien Centres of the human (and animal) sorts have been engaging my thoughts. But it may be that there obtain Centres on lower levels with which my Centre is *even more closely and, indeed, directly in touch*. It suffices to indicate this possibility as certain to occupy us seriously anon.

#### PASSING INTO THE ENVELOPING SYSTEM

§ 9. Anyhow, Solipsism is not an empirical fact. It is mere hypothesis, and hypothesis which my practical beliefs do not approve. My Centre—and this is the rival view—may be relative to an Enveloping System. Its content, in large part, is arbitrarily thrust upon it. Peradventure, if I take account of this System, I shall understand how and why the content comes just as it does. Now the first step in thought outside the circle of my private experience has been taken. I have been compelled, as psychology shows, to have a practical belief in alien conscious Centres. And I have nothing to oppose, theoretically, to this belief save that, standing in one Centre, I am not standing in the conscious spheres of other Centres as well. This failure to reach the actual conscious Centres marks, perhaps, only my present position in the universe. I have noted, withal, the working in me of these alien conscious Centres, and, so far, have asserted my practical belief as true. I have adopted the view that my Centre is *relative to an Enveloping*

*System which includes at any rate psychical existents other than myself.* But the prompting of my practical beliefs is to carry me much further. The situation may be summarised as follows:—

1. Solipsism is not an empirical fact, but hypothesis or supposal, which lacks verification.

2. An opposed hypothesis asserts that my Centre is relative to a transcendent Enveloping System.

3. I prefer this second hypothesis, and have adopted it to the extent of recognising certain alien Centres, which transcend the conscious sphere of my Centre, as real.

4. Regarding these Centres as real in their own right, I propose to use them as a basis for inferring *more* as to the character of the Enveloping System or Macrocosm.

I return to the Mountain and the “black speck”—the object which attests a real alien consciousness of which I am not directly aware. I descend to the valley and accost the man. “His” body, as I perceive it, is just an appearance-complex in my Centre; “his” words, “his” smiles, “his” changes of feature and gesture, etc., are so many aspects of a presentative-representative experience which I, and I alone of all existent individuals, can confront.<sup>1</sup> “His” face (to limit the reference) is so many discriminated colours, lights and shades changeful and variously spaced. What presentation, which is merely visual, refuses me, representation, in no stinted measure, supplies. Now the changes in this face, which exists only in my experience, are relative to changes in an alien Centre which my experience does not and, as now conditioned,

<sup>1</sup> Unless my conscious life falls directly into the larger conscious circle of some superhuman or Divine Centre!

cannot contain. I have to admit that certain events in my Centre point to events which altogether *transcend* its conscious sphere. *I am in touch with a fringe or region of the Enveloping System, the "esse" of which certainly does not consist in its being inferred by me.*

After a while the man sits down and takes a nap. His conscious life is temporarily eclipsed. The face is still in view, and, though placid and having the eyelids shut, looks much as it did before. It points no longer to events in an alien and transcendent conscious Centre? But am I, for that, to regard it as pointing to no transcendent reality at all? *What if it supports inference to ANOTHER REGION of the Enveloping System of which I am in quest?* And the entire body-complex? Is nothing but the now eclipsed human Centre relative, in the Enveloping System, to all this show? Nay, there is no crying halt at this point. I turn now and take in the wondrous prospect of Mountain and valley. Is the man's body alone relative to the transcendent System, while all this vast prospect is *merely* presentation to me! If the few visual appearances in the face have pointed to a transcendent human Centre, surely the many and complex appearances interpreted as the man's body point to transcendent reality of another sort? And the "infinite variety" of Mountain and valley points, no doubt, to spheres of transcendent reality, beside which the transcendent reality relative to the body is restricted indeed. The thin edge of the wedge has been inserted: it remains to drive the bulk of it steadily home. My thought is as yet unshaped, but I am now sure that the alien Centre *does not exhaust the Enveloping System*—the system whose



*esse* does not consist in its being inferred by me. If this or that sensory appearance is certainly relative to the System, it must be held that all other appearances of the kind whatsoever are relative as well. My Centre is *not* a purely self-contained real. It is real in a relativity by which all its perceptions must be determined in part. I have inferred already that *some* of its perceptions are relative to another finite Centre like itself. What of those innumerable other perceptions which are comprised in the construction I call Nature?

#### THE NATURE WHICH I PERCEIVE IS RELATIVE TO A TRANSCENDENT NATURE

There are to be inferred, then, transcendent regions relative, in some way, to what I call *Nature*. Now, I have found that *differences* in one kind of external object point to *differences* in what, in respect of its private being, is a transcendent fact. And object-differences in general must point to corresponding differences in the transcendent facts which they attest. Here, then, is no promise of simplicity such as is sometimes desired. The Enveloping System relative to "my" Nature is complex—probably indefinitely more complex than anything in my sentient life. Can I form any clear conceptions as to what its general character may be? Well, I have discarded the "unknowable" and kindred myths. Agnosticism and its surds have been left behind (§ 3); and the mechanical way of thinking has been examined and set aside (§ 5). "Appearances must be supplemented on the lines which appearances dictate." *An inferred unrepresented region must be conceived as not essentially different from the content of sentient life.* That which exists



must appear, or, under conditions not yet realised, be capable of appearing, *in experience*. There can be no empirical ground for believing in anything else. "Existence-which-cannot-appear" is just a thought—a fact within a purely conceptual domain. It stands for, and can be taken as, nothing in the expanse of Reality beyond.

Suppose now that I face the problem in view of the Mountain. This object, as I have it, is not a "mental modification," but again it falls inside the conscious Centre. It is, however, *also* relative to a Region which is not given, and which falls genuinely outside the Centre. *Now what is this Region?* It is not a limbo of "Things-in-themselves"; it is not a mechanical realm of shades. It is of one tissue with the content of my sentient life. It is complex. But in saying this I have only begun to feel my way forward. A reminder at this stage is perhaps timely. It must not be supposed that this problem is to be dealt with and disposed of off-hand. Its treatment, which must be on very general lines, carries us to further problems, and indeed into the inquiry as to how the universe as a whole has to be understood.

#### HAVE THE CHEMISTS REVEALED THE SECRET?

§ 10. It might be urged, and the view is a very popular one, that the secret of the Region has been already found. After all, there is a science of Chemistry, and atomic and sub-atomic theories, served up with ether, might be supposed to suit our palates well. But we have seen that mechanically conceived theories are too *abstract* to meet our wants. They attend to genuine aspects of the sense-world, and they

build more or less coherent conceptual systems out of these; they have ignored, however, so much that these systems become realms of shades (§ 5). There is no way of going back on a generally applicable criticism of this kind. But, while we are saying this, the cry of the "practical worker" is heard in the land. Atoms and the like are not mere "helps to puzzled mathematicians"; they are also, we are assured, "*physically real*." I might reply that no barely mechanical object is, was, or ever will be "physically real": an object conceived in this manner is an *ens rationis* and not a sensible fact. But the protest of the "practical worker" deserves to be heard. He points to the experimental evidence at his command. Surely there is a soul of truth, as well as of utility, in his thinking: the march from the Democritan atom to the electron has not been altogether in vain. The atomic and allied theories may be provisional, a "temporary scaffolding," as a liberal chemist has said.<sup>1</sup> The inquirer is using "representative fictions," but is he not "representing" transcendent reality, albeit in a one-sided and symbolic manner, after all? Our treatment of the Region will recognise the relevancy of such protests in full. Remodelled, and lifted out of the abstract mechanical domain, the theories must give us serious pause. I will indicate, forthwith, the quarter in which the theoretic illumination of the Region must be sought.

The ancients anticipated the simplification known as atomism in part. When men pass out of the mythopœic stage proper and begin to think, many will attend chiefly to what are now called the "primary qualities" of objects. These qualities stand out so

<sup>1</sup> Professor Cooke.

sharply that they are supposed to be peculiarly real. It is observed, too, that many objects are discontinuous, mere aggregates of smaller objects, and that even a sensibly continuous object like our Mountain breaks up slowly into smaller objects before the assaults of weather or man. The way to atomism is open. The peculiarly real primary qualities, in the form of infinitely numerous and very small homogeneous atoms, are the essence and foundation of all else that appears (*ἐτεῆ δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν*). They are continuous, and do not themselves suffer change. There is no longer a world-riddle, for they have a void to move in, and they move in all sorts of ways. A system of the universe reared on this basis is manifestly absurd. But the vitality of the Democritan atoms, *regarded merely as existents which lie behind sensible objects*, has been remarkable.<sup>1</sup>

The heralds of modern chemistry emphasise the "primary qualities" in a similar way. But primitive atomism was speculative and in the clouds. There are now added the *empirical data*, as well physical as chemical, on which Dalton, Avogadro, and others rest their case. The little masses are discussed and made definite as (1) molecules which, chemically regarded, are the smallest bits in which compounds, retaining their distinctive qualities, can exist, and (2) as atoms proper—the veritable indivisible simples from the union of which compounds arise. These continuous material ultimates are not liable to be

<sup>1</sup> Newton himself surmised that god might have created atoms—"solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, movable particles, . . . so very hard as never to wear or break in pieces." The Democritan atom, though here confronted by a creative god, survives in its essential characteristics unimpaired.



shattered or even frayed in the turmoil of being. For a time all goes well: the approximate size of the little masses is calculated out, and atoms, which resemble the ghosts of defunct billiard-balls, reign indeed! But a variety of atoms, widely differing in respect of mass, and including a great number of "elements" which seem strangely rare, invites further simplification still. It is desired at first to make the lightest known atoms the simples out of which the heavier and, presumably, more complex are built. But the attempt fails. Later, again, Mendeleeff's periodic law prompting, and the reigning *continuous* atom being quite overtaxed, the sub-atom or electron, which has only one-thousandth part of the mass of the hydrogen atom, comes to light. The experimental data relied on are remarkable, but the original abstract mode of interpreting them persists. Chemical combination results from electric "forces" within the atom. Atoms are systems of very numerous revolving electrical corpuscles:<sup>1</sup> systems all of which probably have been evolved, and will eventually be dissolved. The electron, again, may be a "centre of intrinsic strain," this being variously conceived, in the ether. This latter was wont merely to undulate, or occasionally slow, it was suspected, a comet; but its days of leisurely aloofness are clearly past. It is now the universal medium which supports all that ordinary physical reality has to show.

#### THE "SUB-MECHANICAL" IS NOT METAPHYSICS

We note, then, on the one hand, the experimental data; and, on the other hand, the translation of these

<sup>1</sup> An advanced hypothesis this. "Who knows that the atom is wholly composed of electrons? We do not know that as yet" (Sir O. Lodge, *Electrons*, p. 135).



into scientific forms such as have already proved satisfactory in use. If the electric theory of matter suffices for the wants of workers within physics and chemistry, this is certainly no business of ours. If, however, you go beyond the special sciences and become metaphysical—if, for instance, you assert as fact that the transcendent Region relative to the Mountain consists of electrons—then, of course, I shall have to traverse your contention at once.

#### THE ELECTRON AS TAKEN BY ITSELF

If the electric theory is to be held as, in any way, symbolic of fact, it is of the last importance how that obscure hypothetical, the ether, is to be conceived. The electron, *taken by itself*, leaves us within the sphere of mechanics. It suggests, perhaps, a new world where a mystical "electricity" replaces the veteran, but prosaic, atom of the past. But the corpuscle, dubbed "electric," turns out to be only an exceedingly small atom itself. It has extension and inertia or mass; is, accordingly, a hypothetical to which the label "material" can be attached. Its size relatively to the atom-system has been compared with that of "a fly roaming about inside a cathedral."<sup>1</sup> It differs, however, from the fly in having *no secondary qualities*, and, of course, no private feelings, etc., ascribed to it. It is like the ghost of a defunct billiard-ball whose occupation is simply to move. Ordinary matter has been "explained," and a novel

<sup>1</sup> Or, "if an electron is depicted as a speck one-hundredth of an inch in diameter, like one of the full stops on this page for instance, the space available for the few hundred or thousand of such constituent dots to disport themselves inside an atom is comparable to a hundred-feet cube" (Sir O. Lodge, *Electrons*, p. 201).

form of matter is left on our hands. Such an entity is a representative fiction, compact of one or two qualities torn from the sense-world, and *ejected* into a domain to which certain experimental data seem to point.

#### THE ELECTRON AS REFERRED TO THE "ETHER"

If, however, the electron is referred to the ether and regarded, not as an independent body, but only as a persistent and mobile "strain," the old atomic conception has certainly quite disappeared. It remains, however, requisite to consider the ether itself. If you explain it mechanically as made up of more or less closely set spherical grains of changeless shape and size, as subjected to an enormous pressure, as containing ordinary matter as its regions of diminished mass, etc., then you are speaking in a way useful, perhaps, for science, but which metaphysics, of course, cannot pass. We have here a lot of pool-balls in a box; the balls being able to shift a trifle, but always having the same neighbours against which to knock. The sides of the box present a difficulty, while, assuredly, smaller balls will be required to "explain" the big ones anon. Furthermore, we must not forget that the balls are not packed quite tightly. Are there, then, only (ethereal) "atoms and void," or does some new hypothetical "material" thrust itself between the pool-balls and fill the gaps? It is needless, however, to press such points: the main consideration is that we have to leave all such fashions of thinking to science. The ghosts of defunct billiard-balls live (and, for certain purposes, are very useful) in human heads. We ourselves must depart less from experience if we wish to symbolise the transcendent regions which are relative to Nature.

THE TRANSCENDENT BASIS OF NATURE: ITS  
FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER

§ 11. A "sub-mechanical" basis of Nature, such as the above, is in truth no less mechanical than the old atomism which it seeks to replace. Matter is an onlooker at its own funeral! Were my experienced Nature barely mechanical, I too might incline to conceive its basis as mechanical. But, of course, this is just what it is not (§ 5). I proceed, accordingly, to restore to empirical Nature much which the mathematician has dropped, to wit "secondary" qualities and other content which perception conveys to me along with "things." And I urge that the basis of *this* Nature must be far richer than a mechanically conceived ether permits. The word ether, in fact, merely symbolises an "undiscovered country," to whose *general* character, withal, I possess the clue. And here, of course, we recur to what has been said before (§ 9). "An inferred unrepresented region must be conceived as not essentially different from the content of sentient life. That which exists must appear, or, under conditions not yet realised, be capable of appearing in experience. *There is no empirical ground for believing in anything else.*" Even what is called, and in a scientific regard very usefully, the "inertia" of the ether may point to processes which, in their actual reality, are too akin to our own sentient life to be called mechanical at all. Mechanical theory may be only the *partial* point of view of one who *thinks* about these processes, in pursuit of some special end, from the outside. "Inertia" stands on the sentient experience known as resistance, which is felt, in terms of muscular feeling, when our bodies impart or arrest movement. This abstraction,



then, offers no difficulty at all. It is of our own making, and we know exactly of what it consists. The abstraction exists only in our heads, but implies, withal, process in the transcendent basis of Nature. It does not follow that the detail of the transcendent process can be inferred out. But failure to infer it will be due to our limitations and not to the "unknowable" character of the region wherein it obtains.

#### "ENERGETICS"

Are the more philosophical among men of science moving slowly towards our goal? Whetham inclines to think that the ether has properties not unlike those of ordinary objects, as mechanically conceived, but he points out, withal, that it is "not necessarily expressible in terms of matter; it is sub-natural, if not super-natural."<sup>1</sup> We ourselves, however, are not at the mechanical standpoint at all. Ether, for us, is a name for a complex, to whose general character sentient experience must hold the clue. I need not delay here to consider what is called energetics—the view that material objects consist of mystical "energies" which are found together in the same place. "Energy," as a useful fiction, as the "capacity for doing work," we know. But "energies" is a word which, introduced into statements of fact, has too nebulous a meaning to hold us at all. It were absurd to describe material objects as consisting, in last resort, of "capacities for doing work." *What* is "capable" of the "work," and what, again, is the "work which is being done"? Such phrasing may be useful in its place, but assuredly it is useless to metaphysics. I pass to the process by which the transition to transcendent reality is effected.

<sup>1</sup> *The Recent Development of Physical Science*, 2nd ed., p. 282.



### THE MINOR CENTRES

§ 12. Let me point out exactly where we now stand. We are already at home with the idea of an Enveloping System. The Centre in which "I" appear is not an absolutely self-contained real or *monad*, properly so called; it has content which goes out to content in other Centres, human and animal, and, *also*, to the transcendent region relative to what I call Nature. It is this latter region which concerns us now. We have credited it with differences on which depend, in part, the differences which are distinguished in objects perceived. It is certainly *complex*, and it is, *also*, of the character of *experience-content*. We have now to add that it contains indefinitely numerous *minor centres*, and that these centres are fundamentally akin to our own. The transcendent region relative to the Mountain is not to be mechanically conceived. The physico-chemical theories subserve practice: they are not to be mistaken for statements of fact. They reject "secondary qualities" such as all known objects show, and they ignore, *also*, other "qualities" which, per-adventure, ought not to be shelved. The minor centres are not parts of a mechanism. On the other hand, they are not self-contained Leibnitzian monads, but rather emphases, foci of intense activity, travelling eddies, as it were, within A MOTHER-STUFF CO-ESSENTIAL WITH OURSELVES. My conscious Centre is not the Universe; hence this Mother-stuff in its fulness is not, and cannot be, present to me. But my Centre belongs to the Universe; hence the Mother-stuff cannot be regarded as entirely veiled. The drop, we may say, shows what the surrounding ocean is like. The Mother-stuff lies beyond, but it shines *also*, within me.

It is disclosed in the feeling-whole, where my conscious being comes to light. It wells up and reveals itself to itself in the appearance, subjective and objective, whereby from moment to moment I exist. When we come to discuss "the Individual and the Organism," we shall see clearly in what manner I stand within the Centre and am yet, also, an aspect or fragment of the Wider Real.

#### ON POSSIBLE SUPERHUMAN CENTRES

§ 13. There is an issue to which, even at this stage, I must briefly allude. It is clear that there may obtain Centres as far above "mine" as the minor Centres of which I have spoken are below it. It is observed by Bradley that "every fragment of visible Nature might, so far as is known, serve as part in some organism unlike our bodies."<sup>1</sup> I cannot quite accept this way of stating the case. "Visible" Nature appears in the Centre where I, too, appear: it is not a common gift which all the Centres possess at once. But the "invisible" transcendent regions relative to *this* Nature may well provide such organisms as Bradley suggests. The main point, however, is that we cannot limit the types, superhuman or subhuman, that may obtain. We can "set no bounds to the existence or powers of sentient beings"—a consideration of the highest importance, *as well, perhaps, practical as theoretical*, to which we shall recur anon. Appearances such as would warrant inference to such Ejects may not lie to hand; nevertheless, they are worth looking for, and the cautious philosopher will not receive this suggestion amiss. The discovery of Superhumans of an exalted kind may be only a

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, p. 271.

question of time, and the attainment of knowledge on this head one of the most important achievements in the history of races that are to come. On the other hand, we have read the past amiss if we do not require in such a matter an absolutely overwhelming array of proofs. If we recall what is the ground of our inferences to Ejects (§ 8), it is apparent that the Superhuman may elude even the most vigilant research.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE MINOR CENTRES ARE NOT MONADS

§ 14. Meanwhile, the question of the *minor* Centres must, in the first instance, hold our thought. Like the alien human and animal Centres (in which I believe, but which I do not directly know), these minor Centres have to be inferred. Our indirect knowledge of the Enveloping System is thus slowly enlarged. We are not, however, being driven towards Monadism, for reasons which I have indicated before (Part II. Chap. II. § 9). All monadologies, including the one conceived formerly by me, break down when the problem of relating the monads comes to be discussed. There is, however, a short way of disposing of the monads (§ 8). I have no empirical revelation of the first monad with which I must start. It will be allowed that, in establishing a monadology, the first thing requisite is to show that I myself am the appearance of a Monad. If I am not, there is no call to look for monads elsewhere. Well, we saw that what is *given* is just this:—*My conscious processes do not embrace the conscious processes of another human or animal Centre.* Barring this obvious fact,

<sup>1</sup> The initiative, in fine, might have to be taken by the Superhuman—also a possibility that no intelligent man can ignore.



the content of my Centre seems open to all the winds that blow (§ 8).<sup>1</sup> The statement that I appear in a self-contained Monad does not express an empirical fact; it is simply an *hypothesis* to which my practical beliefs and all available theoretical considerations give the lie. However, I need not repeat what has been already said. Failing an empirical revelation of a Monad, there is no call for me to be burdened with the hypothesis at all.

#### WHAT THEY ARE

§ 15. The transcendent region relative to the Mountain is not a mere plurality of Leibnitzian monads or changeless Herbartian "reals." There is no empirical case for monads. The monad is a conceptual entity, a cross between the conceptions of individual soul-substance and the archaic atom: it is not a given fact which experience holds and attests. And, if you insist on adopting these monads, you will not be able to relate them save in a clumsy and non-natural way. The "pre-established harmony" of Leibnitz and the "intelligible space" of Herbart show well how hard it is to unite what have been wrongly put asunder at first. And so we leave the monads behind. The transcendent region is a *continuum*; the centres being immanent in a ground- or mother-stuff that supports, permeates, and interrelates them all. The centres, having no fixed character, might be

<sup>1</sup> There are two interesting considerations which must operate to modify further the notion of the closed circle. (1) Though my Centre is closed to direct knowledge of other human and animal Centres, it may fall genuinely within a wider super-human consciousness. (2) The actual content of an indefinite number of the minor centres does fall within my centre. (Cf. Part II. Chap. IV., "The Individual, the Organism, and Nature.")



likened to travelling eddies in a stream: they persist, and act as wholes what time their content is vanishing and in ceaseless flux. What we term the nature of a minor centre is as fluid as is our own consciousness: the simple that changes not in differing relations is myth.<sup>1</sup> The minor centre *may* be indefinitely complex, but inference, of course, must halt where appearances, such as are harvested by science, fail. Mere conceptual attempts to make an "infinite process" break out inside anything are ridiculous and should be ignored. The minor centre, again, can show "secondary qualities" such as colours, sounds, warmth, etc., as will be seen anon; it can be implicated, also, with my pleasures and pains, and cannot therefore be regarded as *always* sub-conscious, as devoid of some foregleams, at least, of *sentient* being. It marks, indeed, a stage in that cosmic struggle towards *individuation* which culminates in conscious selves; it emerges within its mother-stuff a *changeful but concrete whole*, which, to maintain its existence, has to adjust itself to the relations, furthering and menacing, which compass it about. There is struggle in the dark between the antagonising individuated forms to which the Alogical mother-stuff gives birth. In a restricted sense of the word, of which anon, such a whole must be said to *live*; in a still more restricted sense, sometimes at least, to *feel*. The picture of Nature as an "insentient solitude" (G. Henry Lewes) belongs altogether to the provisional mechanical thinking we have left behind. This

<sup>1</sup> Apropos of the old atomic theory, it was observed by Mill that but for the fact that the weight of "elements" as combined is equal to the sums of their weights as separate, we should probably have adopted a theory of *transformation* instead of one of *combination*. Exactly.

ghostland exists only in philosophers' heads. The centres, again, are not above space and time: their *content* shows both, while, regarded as working wholes, they have their *position* and their *dates* in the flowing of the Wider Real. These and like issues will confront us again in a new shape in the forthcoming chapter.

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#### ADDENDUM

##### NATURE, "MECHANICS," AND "OCCULT" CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

"Nature," says Lewes, "in her insentient solitude is an eternal darkness—an eternal silence."<sup>1</sup> This view, we agreed, is untenable as soon as we require, not working conventions, but truth. Neither the Natures which we know nor the transcendent cosmic activities implied thereby are to be described thus. Nevertheless, this mythological scientists-Nature still dominates the thinking of the majority of even cultured folk. It obtrudes even into the speculations of an idealist like von Hartmann, who regards material objects as consisting of force-centres resolvable into will-idea units whose "ideation" is limited to "spatial attraction and repulsion of uniformly varying intensity and whose volitional manifestations consist in the realising of this limited ideational province." I shall have to urge that the contents assignable to those aspects of Nature called the Minor Centres are far richer than von Hartmann's *idealised mechanics* sees fit to allow. The attribution of "volition" and "ideation" to the centres raises a further issue which will be discussed in its place.

<sup>1</sup> *History of Philosophy*, i. 371.

Of late years we have heard something of "occult" chemistry and physics. Investigators claiming supernormal psychical powers have sought to penetrate where the profane savant is unable to tread. Diagrams have been drawn to show what "atoms" and atom-combinations, etc., are like. It is no business of mine to discuss what qualifications for supernormal inquiries particular students may possess. I am concerned only to enter a caution which bears on all possible researches of the kind. The reader must free himself once and for all from any lingering notion that diagrams and similar visual devices can reveal adequately what the penetralia of Nature are like. Thus there is not the remotest justification for discussing (what I have called) a "minor centre" as if it were merely a VISUAL space-occupying fact. We shall see that the minor centres of the body implicated with my experiences of sound, heat, neuralgia, rheumatism, tastes, smells, visceral sensations, emotions, and what not have contents indefinitely richer and more varied than anything of the character of a diagram could suggest. It is not enough to perceive partially and mediately *from the outside*. As allied with a body I am able, *to some extent*, to know Nature—Nature which has just been discussed provisionally as transcendent—*from the inside*. And having this advantage, I can be sure that no possible description of Nature merely in terms of visual (even *plus* tactual and muscular) experience can meet the case.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INDIVIDUAL, THE ORGANISM, AND NATURE

"Something definite happens when to a certain brain-state a certain 'sciousness' corresponds. A genuine glimpse into what it is would be *the* scientific achievement, before which all past achievements would pale."—WILLIAM JAMES.

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE "MOTHER-STUFF" NOT YET SOLUBLE IN FULL

§ 1. NATURE, as I know it, is a construct based on a passing presentative show. Its place, like that of a thought-process or dream of fancy, is within my Centre. I have seen, however, that it is *also* relative to transcendent reality—reality of which, for the most part, I am not, and under present cosmic conditions cannot be, directly aware. This reality, which is of the character of experience-*content*, is not a plurality of disconnected simples or monads. It is continuous, but in such fashion that minor centres or concrete active wholes, always in change, and real only in a relativity, maintain themselves, and in part, also, are maintained, within it. There is a Mother-stuff and there are the minor individuated centres; and the "substance" of these is sampled in the appearances whereby I exist. The stuff is as psychical in character as the content which I consciously know. Now the mention of this Mother-stuff, or continuous



basis of Nature, prompts me to discuss problems of the ultimate kind. But I shall do well to proceed slowly, not forestalling inquiry which will come in its proper place. For the present I have to understand how the minor centres are related to one another and to *me*. The Mother-stuff will recede into the background. But subsequently it will emerge as, perhaps, the most formidable riddle with which I have to deal.

§ 2. The most important present need is to understand *how* "my" Centre of conscious experience is related to the Enveloping Order. But for this relation I should not confront Nature at all. I desire, also, to know more about the minor centres, and surmise that I shall be able to deal with both problems at once. I have grounds for believing (1) that my Centre is in *direct* contact with a *fragment* of the Enveloping Order; (2) that this mediating fragment consists in part of minor centres, and shows, accordingly, what kind of content a minor centre can hold.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE ORGANISM

It is customary to assert that my "consciousness" is related to "natural objects" through "my" body, and that it is allied more especially with a certain portion of "my" body called the cortex of the brain. This statement cannot pass unsifted into metaphysics. What is meant by "my" body? The body which *I* perceive, or one of the *bodies* which *you* and others perceive and assign to me? It is a (practically useful) fiction that we all perceive the *same* body. In fact, we do nothing of the kind. So many percipient Centres, so many of the objects called bodies. When, therefore, I propose to discuss the

relation of my conscious Centre to "my" organism, it is in the last degree necessary that I should know for what this word "body" or "organism" is to stand. Well, shall I ignore other percipients, and say bluntly that what is meant is the organism *which I perceive*? We are not out of the difficulty, as a very little reflection will show.

WHAT DO I MEAN HERE BY "BODY" OR  
"ORGANISM"?

I must repeat that, strictly speaking, we confront not Nature, but Natures. The sum-total of what I call external reality, a construct from the passing presentations of the moment, is peculiar to my experience. All the objects I confront are present to me and to no other finite being.<sup>1</sup> Among these objects is the "thing" I call my body—the haunting complex that seldom fades out of notice during my waking life. If, now, it is asked, How is my Centre related to *this* object? the answer is plain: *It contains it*. And it contains it just as it does all other objects. Is, then, the relation of the Centre to the organism merely that of Container to the contained? Or is it some other meaning of "organism" that I have in view?

Clearly, what I am to consider is a relation of another kind. The organism as perceived exists within the Centre. I do not desire to find how the Centre is related to *this* object: the relation is an open secret which needs no looking for, and, indeed, leaps to the eye. I desire to discover how the Centre is related to that arrangement of *minor centres* to

<sup>1</sup> Unless my conscious being falls within the consciousness of some superhuman being.

which, as we have seen, the perceived object, called organism, assuredly points.

### THE REAL LIVING PROBLEM

It is common knowledge that a controversy has long raged as to the character of the alliance between "consciousness" and "body." And a confusion literally appalling awaits the student who is in earnest with the literature of the subject. There is a widespread failure to realise the difficulties raised by "body." I will not depict the chaos, but will content myself with saying this: Idealism empties the old "Mind-Body" disputes of meaning.<sup>1</sup> The problem before us is not to relate "consciousness" to a body existing in an independent *material* order "diametrically in contrast" with it, as Sir W. Hamilton would say. We have got rid of this "contrasted" order for good: it does not exist, in fact, outside human thinking. The real, living problem is to show *how my entire conscious being is allied with the activity of certain implicated minor centres—centres which obtain in a mother-stuff essentially of the same character as I.* The solution of this problem will go far to reveal the standing of my Centre in the universe, in the main transcendent, of which it forms a part. This Centre is in touch, direct and immediate, with a fragment of the Enveloping Order. And while I am learning more about this Centre, the qualities of the allied minor centres will assuredly come dimly to light. Regarded in one aspect, these minor centres are the feeders of sense; but they are, emphatically, not what Kant called "Things-in-them-

<sup>1</sup> "Mind" is an improper term to be used in this connection at all. *Outward*, as well as *inward*, experience is comprised in conscious being.

selves." That which *appears*, or can appear, in my being falls within the sphere of the known or knowable at once.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SENSATE?

§ 3. A halloo is borne to my ears from yon ridge beyond the torrent. What are the proximate conditions of my having this sensation? The physicist and physiologist speak of successive longitudinal air-waves, which, setting a delicate mechanism in the ear quivering, transmit disturbances, variously conceived as "currents," "vibrations," etc., to the neurones of the auditory tract and connected permeable brain-paths. Along with the changes in the neurones there arises the sound-sensation with the "associated ideas," visual, motor, tactual, etc. (all allied somehow with brain-states), which amplify and interpret it. What is the metaphysical rendering of the happenings thus provisionally described?

### AN ANSWER AS YET, HOWEVER, INCOMPLETE

I conceive it, on the lines on which we have been moving, to be this. The entire series of changes which are discussed as taking place in the air, the ear, and the brain symbolise processes which are occurring in the *minor centres*—in that *continuous basis* of Nature which is fundamentally of the same character as I. In each centre, considered separately, the momentary content has altered; there is an invasion or encroachment from the side of centres relative to it. The minor centre is not on a level where anything like volition or ideation could obtain; to will and to have ideas are possible only where





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subject and object, as in the case of conscious beings like ourselves, have been evolved. "Will-idea" units, such as those of von Hartmann and others, must be shelved. The minor centre, while certainly no mechanical fact, belongs to the abyss of struggle, and in this dark bourne developments which do not show even in the lower animal world cannot have dawned. There is a blind inrush from the minor centres continuous with my Centre. And there is an inrush, again, into these invading centres from other minor centres. In the mere *fact* of having its activity modified the minor centre reacts, or encroaches, on contiguous—I am prepared to justify this term<sup>1</sup>—centres, and the result may well seem, to one who thinks about it from the outside, decreed by a mechanical fate. These blindly mediated changes invade the innumerable minor centres which constitute the cortical neurones. What now ensues? The Centre in which I stand is aware of a sensation. And what does this happening imply? Well, my sound-sensation is complex, and its phases, as physiologically discussed, answer to phases of events in a variety of brain-cells. And, again, noting the physiological evidence, I recall that "consciousness" accompanies those relatively intense brain-changes which involve neural "friction" or resistance. The hypothesis, then, to which, at first, I incline is, perhaps, this:—My Centre is invaded by innumerable specially intense psychical facts of which, for the moment, the brain-cells in part *consist*. That which is not thus emergent or intense is not *consciously* presented at all. The suggestion is that sensation results from struggle, from that pressure of the Alogical which decrees that only those aspects of existence which are strong force themselves on to

<sup>1</sup> §§ 6, 7, 8, 9.

the level of conscious presentation. And this view, carefully interpreted, may be correct. But the Centre in which I stand is not a monad, and it is not clear yet in what sense it can be said to be *invaded* at all. A commanding consideration, which certainly must not be shirked, is this. *Whenever the brain-changes occur, I perceive, remember, will, have emotions, or vaguely "feel."* *When they fail to occur, no such conscious processes arise.* Is my Centre, then, merely the *sum-total* of the minor-centre-processes that are specially intense? In this case there is no Centre, opposed to the minor centres, which their processes can be said to invade. But suppose, again, that the Centre is *more than* the sum-total of the processes? What is the content which constitutes its momentary being *apart from what it receives*? There is a most serious difficulty here. And it is more serious even than it looks at first. The Centre may be *more than* the minor centres, but can it be said to exist in any way independently of them and in its own right? I have to state this difficulty frankly, deferring the discussion which is to lay it anon. But a suspicion, I opine, is mastering the reader apace. I have stated an idealistic theory of experience. But this idealism seems in a fair way of doing what the old-time materialism used to do for us before. It is about to make the organism the source and support of conscious life! The organism is itself idealistically thought. What, however, avails this, if "the thing that can say 'I'" is nothing but brain-process flooded with light? Schopenhauer was an idealist, but he regarded consciousness as the focus of cerebral activities, rejecting the beloved "psyche" as a vain dream. Am I to exploit idealism in a similar way?

The answer, which should prove satisfactory, will be forthcoming later.

#### AN INSIGHT INTO THE CONTINUOUS BASIS OF NATURE

§ 4. Meanwhile we shall note that the minor centres are showing their characters. In the process of being felt they are revealing in some measure what they contain. When I perceive colours or hear sounds, have tastes, smells, visceral feelings, pleasures and pains, etc., I am aware of complexes which the innumerable minor centres, answering to the parts of the cortex-cells, possess distributed among themselves. And as such facts as a bright colour or acute pain *imply consciousness*, I must consider whether even in *these* centres there do not obtain foregleams of sentient life. It seems reasonable to contend that such is actually the case. It may be that these foregleams obtain only in those peculiar relations in which these centres support cerebral life. But, after all, this is mere supposing. Other parts of the organism may be allied with foregleams unknown to me. And in many natural activities outside the organism, the minor centres may pass into a nascent sentient life. "*Consciousness*" *seems a level to which any kind of content, given favouring conditions, can rise.* On the other hand, we must avoid flights of fancy when evidence is far to seek. The late Professor Zöllner held that "*all the activities of natural existences are determined by sensations of pleasure and pain, and are indeed such that the movements within a confined sphere of phenomena look as if they followed the unconscious purpose of reducing the total of painful sensation to a minimum.*"



And this, I must really urge, is to say too much. All activity, even for us, is not motived by pleasures and pains. And the attribution of purpose, and with it necessarily ideation, to the minor centres is too fanciful a supposition to be seriously entertained. Again, *unconscious* activity, attended with *pain*, seems of the nature of an abuse of language. Content which is neutral in character can belong to the sub-conscious, but content which is pleasant or painful is surely, if thought and language retain any meaning, *felt*. It is probable, indeed, that pleasures and pains have a very important bearing on the issue as to how consciousness is evolved. But the metaphysical import of pleasures and pains is a topic that must concern us later.

#### MY CENTRE AND THE ENVELOPING ORDER ARE IN ACTUAL TOUCH

I confront, indeed, in the content of minor centres a further indication of what the *continuous-basis* of Nature is like. This complex is aglow with the "secondary qualities," and is marked in special regions at least by pleasures and pains. A mere fragment of this basis—certain ongoings in a part of the organism—displays itself *directly* to me. But I take the fragment as sampling the character of indefinitely vast territories which are not directly known. And at the same time I am beginning to understand at what point the microcosm—my Centre and its possessions—and the macrocosm, or Enveloping Order, are in touch. Let me illustrate this by adverting to the perception of Colour. Colour is not what Schopenhauer, a subjective idealist at heart, made it—to wit, a passing appearance which exists *only* for me.<sup>1</sup> *This*

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly practicable to reconcile this statement with his



blue, you say, is a content of the Centre. Quite so. But the content of the Centre is relative to content not-given; it is continuous with, and belongs to, the transcendent (for me) basis of Nature. I am standing within my Centre, but find that the Centre gives on to the wider real. There is an *ordo ad individuum* and an *ordo ad universum*. The blue of which I am conscious belongs clearly to my private universe, and, unless some superhuman or Divine Being contains my conscious life, belongs as such to nothing else. But, again, why does the blue appear to me at all? It appears because certain minor centres, the *esse* of which does not consist in their being known by me, are themselves, at least in part, "blue." And these centres obtain in an Order indefinitely wider than the limited province of reality of which I am aware. The continuous basis of Nature supports the "blue" which I consciously hold. Subjective Idealism, then, is true, but it is not *sufficiently* true to stand for the complete fact. The expectation that we should emerge from the Centre (Part II. Chap. II. § 2) has been fulfilled. "I am standing *within* my Centre, but I shall be seen shortly to stand *outside* it as well." The Centre is relative to the Enveloping System, and, through the *directly known* content of certain minor centres, to the *mediated* entirety discussed as the continuous basis of Nature.

#### IS ALL THIS TOO "METAPHYSICAL"?

But, perhaps, some readers versed in science will protest anew at this point, and declare that our think-theory of the "Ideas" which appear in the plurality of my world. How can visible beauty proceed from an Idea if colour is merely for me? But Schopenhauer oscillates violently between subjective and objective idealism.

ing is too "metaphysical." Hence, at the risk of being tedious, I will repeat a previous statement. We are all metaphysicians. Even the agnostic talks metaphysics, just because he cannot help doing so (Part I. Chap. II. §§ 1, 2). We have *got* to think, and the important thing is to make sure that we are thinking aright. Above all, where metaphysics are concerned we have to avoid "one-sided forms of thought fixed by the understanding, and making these the basis of our theoretical as of our practical work."<sup>1</sup> Now the scientific views about objects, if taken to state fact, are *hopelessly one-sided*, as we have already seen. They do *not* present what is observed, but mutilate this and serve up the remains as bad metaphysics. "It is," observes Hegel, "a very deep-seated, and perhaps the main, defect of modern researches into Nature, that even where other and higher categories than those of mere mechanism are in operation, they still stick obstinately to the mechanical laws, *although they thus conflict with the testimony of unbiassed perception and foreclose the gate to adequate knowledge of Nature.*"<sup>2</sup> Not endorsing Hegel's view of "categories," we need not accept this saying quite as it stands. But we must affirm, like he, that "Mechanism" implies a treatment applicable only to abstract relations of matter. And "matter," again, is just a conceptual figment and not a sensible concrete fact. The fundamental importance of this view amply justifies me in recalling it here. "Mechanism" is veritably a "shallow and superficial mode of observation"; it leaves too much ignored, and, *were the said ignoring not useful*, is a category which could only be characterised as grotesque. And when

<sup>1</sup> Hegel.

<sup>2</sup> "Doctrine of the Notion," *Logic of Hegel*, p. 291.

Mechanism, as is frequent, invades the *entire* realms of physics, chemistry, organic life, and even conscious being, the break with experience is complete and monstrous indeed. This whole manner of conceiving, upon which so much of modern science stands, is untrue—a mere Idol of the Tribe, to which are sacrificed the rich empirical data at command. We have to assert, then, that Nature-philosophy *must* be conceived in terms more adequate to the facts. And we have indicated the ground from which such a tentative advance can be made. There is no sensible experience of a mechanical world, but there is abundance of experience of the kind we desiderate here. In Experience, the outward and inward present, the required material is lying ready to hand. A fragment of the continuous basis of Nature appears to me, is being veritably thrust on my notice, as I write. I know this fragment directly. I cannot know the unperceived provinces of the continuous basis in this way. I must, therefore, try to know *about* them. The transition, of course, lies through the makeshift of inference.

#### THE "MANY" CANNOT BE MERGED IN THE "ONE"

§ 5. The minor centres are not absolute, not closed independent existents, but finite relative wholes, which maintain a changeful being and pass over, and enter, into one another in the process. They are real in a relativity, *i.e.*, they are what they are in virtue of what they are not. Their existence, so far, lies outside themselves. Nothing flows by itself: its streaming is *also* the manifestation of activity or process without. Plurality, withal, is as basic as Unity: the Many are every whit as radical as the



One. We have agreed not to discuss the ultimate problems connected with Nature at this stage. Hence, consideration of the deeper issue of the "One and the Many" is postponed. But we can assert this much at once: all attempts to treat the Many dialectically, after the manner of Hegel, will fail.<sup>1</sup> The Many are not a subordinate stage in the "*thought*"-content of an Absolute Idea. There is no Rational *prius* and no incrassated Logic in things. The Ground of the world-order is Alogical, and what emerges and maintains itself there does so, in the last resort, in virtue of its MIGHT.

#### THE NEXUS BETWEEN THE PLURAL CENTRES

§ 6. But, not to plumb ultimate problems, let us confine ourselves to the plurality, overt, obvious, and aggressive, that shows in and through Nature. We must assert, with Hegel, that "the nexus binding the Many with one another is by no means an accident . . . the nexus is founded on their very nature." And the nexus between the centres (which exemplify, but do not, of course, exhaust the Many) is genuine and lies in the mother-stuff or continuous basis which is their ground. They are not, as we saw, closed spheres having content unchangeably and impenetrably their own. The mother-stuff forces them together. They seem indefinitely complex, but this complexity is open to encroaching influences on every side. Some aspects of the complexity change at rates slower than others (as in a major Centre), but no aspect is unassailably intact and secure. In this essential relativity there is no Gibraltar, no inner core of content which defies

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Logic of Hegel* ("Doctrine of Being," pp. 155-6), on the One and the Many.



assault. Changes are being enforced in all quarters. "Nothing," to quote the poet again, "is that's single"; all things (not, however, by a "law divine"! ) "in one another's being mingle." There lurks, no doubt, a riddle within this saying. *What differences, then, come to relativity at all?* We are not, however, as I have already remarked, discussing a final problem of this kind. We are considering how the minor centres are connected in Nature. They are, both for us and in themselves, real in a relativity. And the ground of the relativity is this mother-stuff which is more than they.

The relativity, at any rate, is a fact, and has, perhaps, the alogical ground just assigned. And we might be content to postpone further discussion of the problem and pass on. An attempt, however, will be made to understand more fully the manner in which the relativity obtains.

#### SYMBOLISM WHICH PROVES OF WORTH

"Matter" has been regarded by one school as the unity of *attractive* and *repulsive* "forces." Well, we know that both "matter" and "force" are abstractions, and not names for concretely objective facts. Hence the statement makes no appeal to us in this form. It has, however, two merits which we must not overlook. (1) It rejects the *dead* stability of vulgar matter or mass, and finds in *process*, and indeed struggle, that by which Nature is from moment to moment upheld. Nature is no inert precipitate, but aglow with ceaseless activity and unrest. Our idealist dynamism lodges this activity and unrest in the centres—the only real "forces" or active wholes which can exist both for us *and* independently of our thinking. (2) "Attraction"

and "repulsion" are figurative mechanical ways of symbolising a truth. These words imply space and movements in space. NOW A CENTRE IS SPATIAL IN FACT. The Leibnitzian monad was not. That monad was held to be a purely "internal" substance—a *vis representativa* sheltered from all space-determinations such as position, movement, size, shape, and the like. It was mere inward being without an outside. Hence the monads could not be related externally, but only internally and by way of a harmony pre-established by God. Leibnitz's hypothesis sounds, and unquestionably is, artificial and forced. But those who raise the "Substance of Mind" above space always create riddles to which no tolerable answer can be returned. The ordinary dualist is an interesting person in this regard. He invents an "unextended Substance of Mind" and a separate "extended material world." He desires, then, to relate these, and finds that there is no way of accomplishing his aim. His task is so severe, in fact, that there is no intelligible result to be attained. The insuperable difficulty of the problem arises from the manner in which it has been approached.

#### EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT MY OWN CENTRE IS SPATIAL

An abstract-dogmatic method, based on "clear conceptions," was favoured by Leibnitz. But Empiricism, of course, is the platform on which we stand. And, in the light of empirical knowledge, the monad of Leibnitz and all like beliefs in an unextended "Substance of Mind" have to go. We saw previously that my Centre is nothing above time and space (Part II. Chap. II. § 11.). The extended landscape which I now perceive falls within this Centre, and, so far,

constitutes a tract of it. And it is not only perceptual contents which appear in the *manner* abstracted as space. "Emotions," I urged long ago, "fill the Centre with varying degrees of bulk. The idea of a jar is just as much extended as is the percept of a jar."<sup>1</sup> The jar is represented in colours, and the colours, for the good visualiser, are pretty clear. But to be aware of colours is to be aware of them as co-existent: they bound one another, and this bounding is the fact that they are set as space (Part II. Chap. III. § 6). Similarly, the Mountain which I recall is just as spatial as the Mountain which I perceive (*ibid.*). And when *represented* objects are abnormally vivid, they may stand out in such fashion as to oust parts of the *presented* order from view. Space, in fine, is a manner of appearing of the inward, as well as of the outward, given. And consciousness, which lights this given, is nothing separable from the content so lit. It marks a level to which certain content in the focus of attention has risen, and to which content, now, perhaps, below the threshold, may rise. If a superhuman being became aware of my Centre, he would possess its contents as they appear to me. The aspects of the Mountain which I perceive and of the Mountain which I recall would alike show that *manner of appearing* which, abstracted and fixed as a topic for discussion, I call "space." But the Centre, apart from its content, is nothing. Hence, finding the content spatial, the being would find the Centre a

<sup>1</sup> *Riddle* (1893), p. 109. A better illustration is that of the balls on an *imaginary* billiard-table. "Movements," "positions," "directions," "shapes," "sizes"—you have them all. They may be vividly present to the mind of a good visualiser. All sensations alike, as James and others have urged, show a primitive "extensity." Presentations being thus originally spatial, *representations*, or "ideas" of them, are necessarily spatial as well.



spatial complex as well. He could require no further evidence; for, outside the content, there is, by supposition, no shred of evidence to be had.

POPULAR PHILOSOPHY CONCEIVES THE CENTRE AS  
UNEXTENDED JUST TO CONTRAST IT WITH A  
SUPPOSED INDEPENDENT MECHANICAL WORLD.

There is a popular view of Space, still very prevalent, which darkens metaphysical thinking. Space is often regarded as a *something in which* mechanical objects of different shapes, sizes, and positions, and a nondescript kind of object, continuous or discontinuous, called Ether, somehow float. The conscious Centre cannot be allowed to drift about in such questionable company! So it is felt best to make it unextended and withdraw it entirely from subjection to Space. An heroic measure, forsooth! A mechanically conceived cosmos exists, as we have agreed, only in men's heads. And Space, again, viewed as *something in which* this cosmos floats, is just a conceptual entity and nothing more. Space, as PRESENTED and IMAGINED, is the manner in which aspects of my Centre described as "co-existent" appear. No content, no presented or represented space. The different CONCEPTUAL spaces, popular and mathematical, are more or less useful inventions thrown off by thought. And "Space-in-general"—that in which objects are set, the empty "frame" or "room" wherein independent things are extended and move—certainly exists, but only within the intellectual or verbal-notional domain. It and its "dimensions" belong entirely to subjective thought. We are not, of course, to be mastered by creations in this restricted field.



## PENETRATION

§ 7. But there is a further very important province of space, and one not *merely* conceptual, to be dealt with. I have spoken of the spatial character of my Centre. But there are innumerable minor centres, all of which I must take as spatial as well; and these centres, again, are interrelated. How do they hang together and interact? For the sake of illustration, place yourself once more in the position of a superhuman with a central point of view. He is able, we are to suppose, to intuit these centres together. *Space, then, for him would be the manner in which these inter-related centres appear.* He would grasp in a direct way the relativity in which the centres mingle in one another's being. And what would he actually confront? A genuinely tenable supposition seems to be this.<sup>1</sup> A centre as related to the other centres is *in* space; space being the abstract of the manner in which the collective centres appear. And the mode in which one centre is relative to a neighbour—to a *contiguous* centre—is expressible, not metaphorically, but literally, as Penetration. And Penetration means just this, that the content in one centre *invades* the content in another, and that, to this extent, *two* space-areas disappear or merge into *one*.<sup>2</sup> This invasion reveals the Alogical, the stamp of which is not rationality but MIGHT. Our

<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis occurs in a cruder form, and marred by treatment of the centres as monads, in my *Riddle* (1893), p. 314 *et seq.* It is not to be confounded with the "intelligible space" hypothesis of Herbert.

<sup>2</sup> I am supposing, for the sake of simplicity, that we have to deal only with the centres; that only *centre-contents* penetrate, and are penetrated by, *centre-contents*. But there is the all-important continuous basis, or Mother-stuff, to be reckoned with. It is *more than* the centres—the continuum which, doubtless, holds much more content than they.

superhuman observer confronts a struggle for existence. When invasion occurs there is space-annihilation, and the two contents that come together give birth to a third product different from both. Each centre is a focus of activity with a content that is actively maintained. This content is not ear-marked for the Centre; still, so long as it appears there it cannot be *simply* destroyed. It is a *might*, and even against a superior invading might must, just to the extent of its inferior might, prevail. It is caught up in the intruder, and the final appearance or content is the creation of both. I say creation advisedly; for Nature is, indeed, a *continuous creation*, the *novel* being of the very essence of its life. All changes reveal something which has never happened before. And as Nature is in ceaseless change, we read a fresh meaning into the old saying, Strife is the Father of Things.

#### DIALECTIC AND NATURAL PROCESS

§ 8. And here an interesting light is thrown on an aspect of Hegel's system. Dialectic, for this thinker, enters into metaphysics; but its scope (a point often misunderstood) extends far beyond the limits of philosophical thinking. It is the "universal and irresistible power" which all that surrounds us attests. It is manifest, accordingly, in Nature. Even the "physical elements prove to be dialectical. The process of meteorological action is the appearance of their Dialectic. It is the same dynamic that lies at the root of every other natural process, and, as it were, forces Nature out of itself."<sup>1</sup> Now we dissent from this theory. What obtains primarily in Nature is the rule of Might—of the Alogical, which thrusts content

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. 128.

on content and so forces this "out of itself." But we have seen, further, that there is a notable *triplicity* in this act. There is (A) the invading or encroaching content; (B) the content invaded; and (C) the final content issuing from their strife. Now it seems that we have here the process which mere *thought*, even in the form of dialectic, can never express.

You desire, let me suppose, to think the situation in a dialectical way. This being so, you will call (A) the affirmation, (B) the negation, and (C) the affirmation in which the negation is abolished while preserved. And you will urge that this dialectic is rational, containing its principle of movement, which is logical, within itself; (A) passing into its opposite (B), and being implicitly its return into itself enriched as (C). But the falsity of this dialectic leaps to the eye. There is no immanent process whereby (A) passes into (B); and (C), again, is not (A) back in itself. You have *united* the "moments" dialectically, but you have not shown how they were produced. For (B) does not flow out of (A), but is "posited," as it were, in its own right. (C), again, is the result of struggle, and cannot be said, therefore, to have been implicit in (A). Rationalism lays claim (after the event!) to moments which the Alogical supplies.

In Penetration differences may meet at the same point of time and space. They collapse into a novel result in which both are and yet are not. Struggle here is the source of qualitative change; the driving power being alogical, the power (not dialectical!) that never "works its own dissolution," but *resists* what is opposed to it, and impossibly without some measure of success. Still we are not to suppose that all penetra-



tion involves strife. A content may further an invaded content, so that struggle is not universal even on the lowest levels of being.

Struggle, however, will be more acute on these levels because the minor centre has *all but* a universe compassing it about—is a very petty state with no fixed frontiers, and is open to countless raiders. On the other hand, it is not shut up within itself, but is present, if mediately, wherever its influences work. The one-sided (A is B) proposition of “practice” is not able to express the situation in full. There is the nuclear centre, and there is also the centre viewed as invasive of centres outside. An illustration, already made use of, lies to hand. The human lover is present to his beloved, if thought and language retain any meaning. Spirit communes with spirit, and all barriers seem to have broken down. Nevertheless, the nuclear self, the actual conscious being, of the lover holds aloof: it is only indirectly and mediately that he enters into the adored one’s life. Just similarly the Sun-centres are remote, but they are *also* present mediately in the leaves, the grass, and the tints of the soap-bubble. All natural processes are mingled with one another and interlace. Similarly, “all magnets are sympathetically connected, so that if suitably suspended . . . one disturbs others, even though they be distant 92,000,000 miles” (Oliver Lodge). The *facts*, indeed, of physical science, re-thought in an adequate, *i.e.* in a metaphysical way, would illustrate this mediation on the grand scale. It may be suggested, perhaps, that mediation is not always required. I have referred in one illustration to the relations of *two human* Centres. Does not “Telepathy” show that one such Centre may affect another directly, even



though this latter is very remote? Well, Telepathy is a word that refers us to indubitable facts. But there is no evidence to show that what appears in the affected Centre has been imported into it unmediated. The discovery of the mediation is, doubtless, only a question of time. I urged in my last work that Telepathy may come to be considered "a merely emergent aspect of a process continually operative." The notable point about it is that Centre affects Centre along an unfamiliar route; brain being "sympathetically connected" with brain, like the magnets, and presumably with etheric minor centres in the mother-stuff to link them up. There is no reason to lay special stress on occurrences of this sort. They are interesting, but they mark no fundamental departure from what obtains elsewhere. The relativity of minor centres, implied by the lighting of a match or the changes in a sunset cloud, is fully as remarkable for those who can think as well as gape.

#### IDEALISM, SPACE AND TIME

§ 9. Idealism, in fine, must give space its due. My Centre, whatever else it is, is spatial as well. And even with respect to the minor centres I am not confined to inference—I confront the spatial appearance of *some* of them in the brain: survey here a fragment of the basis of Nature in the light. There remains that wider space, set as which *all* the centres, intuited by our hypothetical superhuman, would appear. We have here a scheme *into* which any mechanically described cosmos of science can be idealistically re-thought; for space is not, what Kant and Schopenhauer made it, only a form of presentation im-

posed on percipients like me. Appearances are spatial *in themselves*. "Consciousness," which illuminates them *for me*, is like the daylight in which an already existent mountain is able to show. But what are called modes of Extension seem to go less deep than the "secondary" qualities flouted of yore. The extensions of two contents, as we have suggested, may blend. And as a form or manner of appearing extension may be, cosmically speaking, a development and not native to first "matter" (in the metaphysical sense of the term) or the original mother-stuff of Nature at all. It is needless to pursue such a speculative discussion here.

Time, like space, is a manner of appearing of content in my Centre. It is nothing apart from this content—no receptacle or *something in which* events occur.<sup>1</sup> No content, no Time. But, again, this manner of appearing is not just a show for finite percipients like me. The subjective idealist statement is incomplete. I confront in the content of the cerebral minor centres a succession immanent in the continuous basis of Nature. I perceive in a fragment what obtains, also, in the indefinitely wider domain. Appearances, which are relative, flow not only for me, but in themselves. There is a real flux in which my Centre and, perhaps, all centres, superhuman (if such there be), human, subhuman, and minor are borne along. We shall recur to further aspects of the Space-Time riddle anon. Enough has been said in view of the immediate task before us.

<sup>1</sup> "An indefinite succession of successions unequal in rapidity" is Mill's characterisation of Time (*Exam. of Hamilton*, p. 253). The notion that Time is intuited as an "infinite necessary continuum" belongs to mythology.

## "RESISTANCE" AND THE MINOR CENTRES

§ 10. "Resistance" (along with Extension) is the base-quality attended to in the mechanical conceiving of objects. All material objects are said to agree in showing "resistance"; and anything which shows "resistance" is a material object. A stone (1) resists being moved by my stick; (2) if itself moving, imparts movement to the stick, its resistance or inertia being manifested in another way. "The first aspect of resistance is the more popular meaning of inertia; the second aspect, the imparting of movement, is the popular view of force; but in the scientific consideration of the subject they are but one property" (Bain).

Is this Resistance a "quality" that goes very deep? Or is it just an abstraction (helped out by *ideal muscular feelings*) useful to those who work on surfaces, manipulating and discussing aspects of fact from the outside? We had best profit by previous discussions, and get to the heart of the subject at once.

Why does the stone move the stick? The perceived appearances leave this difficulty on our hands. There is a succession of events for consciousness, and the upshot is that two objects are re-arranged. *Why does this succession occur for my consciousness at all?* There is no answering this riddle, if we keep to the surface of things. Let us go deeper. Inquiry has acquainted us with the minor centres or modes of the continuous basis of Nature. Is there anything *here* which throws light on the behaviour of the stone and the stick? More especially, does anything

occur *here* to which we can apply the word "resist"? Well, we are not entirely ignorant in this latter regard. A centre may "resist," in a literal and not metaphorical sense, an invading or invaded content. And this, perhaps, is the fact which those of a mechanical bent approach, in a partial and abstract way, from the outside.

The centre, as we have seen, is to some extent, at least, penetrable. And it does not *resist* (struggle against) content which forwards, agrees with, expands, its qualitative being. On the other hand, it is self-preserving even amid change, and *resists* penetration which overrules, or tends to suppress, that being. And this attitude characterises not only the centre considered singly, but complexly interrelated groups of centres as well. Further, there is a genuine spatial field in which the centres obtain: they are veritably *in* space as we have agreed to understand it. Their momentary contents being such and such, struggle decides what *positions*, what *movements*, what *neighbours*, etc., given centres or complex centre-*groupings* are to possess. In the having of its content a centre will attract, and be attracted by, what forwards it; will repel, and be repelled by, what thwarts or menaces it. It will normally be attracted and repelled in many directions at once: encroaching contents are many, and dictate ceaseless and unavoidable unrest.

Thus there is nothing inert in the continuous basis of Nature. If, then, you ask me why the stone "resists" being moved by the stick, or why, if moving, it imparts movement to the stick, I must ask you to cease discussing such problems from the outside and



to look to the Minor Centres. The stone of your sensible world does not, if you desire a statement of fact, "exert force," or "operate," on the stick: two perceived objects are re-arranged, and this is about all that your direct experience reveals. Truth to tell, the stone and the stick announce *mediately and obscurely* to you process happening in a domain which falls outside your consciousness. They are poor SHADOWS of *indefinitely complex* facts barely indicated, as it were, within the confines of brain (§ 16). Stone and stick point to a space-struggle of centres in which both sides are *active*, both sides *resist*, and the merely *passive*, inert or indifferent, quality does not appear.

#### CAUSALITY AND NATURAL PROCESS

§ 11. Closely connected with Time is the topic of Causality. Time is popularly viewed as something that is flowing towards us, is with us, and is also passing into a nebulous region or limbo away from us. This movement is from the Future, the bourne whence the concrete complexity of fact is renewed, through the elusive Present, into the Past; the latter being often discussed as if it co-existed somewhere and somehow with what takes place "now." (A time is coming, memories are evoked from the Past, etc.) We must do violence to Appearance if we are to accept this view. Time, apart from content, is nothing, and there are no stationary "egos" towards which it comes. The Future is being born; and the Past, which is not intuited, exists only as represented, and in so far as it has collapsed into the cosmic present. Reality is nowhere fixed, but changes forward *into* the future; the Centres are not onlookers,

but are swept along and altered in the Mother-stuff, where "contradiction" is life.

"Cause and Effect" is a way of regarding, and dealing with, the succession-complex as which this changeful Reality flows — a complex only fragmentarily, mediately, and obscurely present to finite beings. Historically, its rise is to be sought in ordinary psychical processes in the service of need. The cause-seeking propensity, or original dominantly practical *attitude*, is fixed by struggle. It is developed slowly into what we know as the conscious search for laws or abstract "uniformities" of causation.

The covering intellectual Principle of Causality asserts (1) that no event or happening comes spontaneously, but results from conditions; (2) that, given the same conditions, the happening will always be the same. It is important what meaning is attached to the word "same." One view of the Principle makes it the formula of *Identity* applied to the successive.

Cause and Effect are popularly taken as *separate* facts parted by time. And the popular rendering of cause, *i.e.* the totality of the conditions, is always, and often desirably, very partial. There is no attempt made to notice or state the concurring circumstances or conditions in full. Some special circumstance, to which it is practically important to attend, thrusts itself into view. It was owing to treading on a piece of orange-peel that I fell and knocked out a tooth. Even the absence of a circumstance may be cited as a cause: the absence of a spark

between the plug-points is the "cause" why the petrol engine has stopped. The man of science leaves this mode of viewing cause behind, but even he does not state the conditions in full. Do you want to know the "cause" of the petrol engine working? This implicates the planet; indeed, you will be driven to drag in the Sun and even more. The man of science will supplement the conditions emphasised by the plain man, but he cannot hope, nor does he desire, to grapple with the totality of the conditions involved. He states the "essential and invariable" conditions, and treats the rest as irrelevant, as rubbish which can *conveniently* be ignored. But, after all, these merely partial and hence abstract conditions can never, in and by themselves, be adequate to the occurring of an event. Thus Causality, even on this level, is a device whereby, in Mach's words, "we arbitrarily give relief to those elements to whose connection we have to attend in the reproduction of a fact *in the respect in which it is important to us.*" If we were to retrace the history of the cause-seeking propensity, we should find that it was cradled in need. Primitive sentients had to treat certain happenings, at least, not as standing alone, but as indicative of practically important facts which had gone before. Hearing a growl, a caveman had to picture (what the plain man to-day calls) its "cause"—to wit, an antecedent circumstance, say a cave-bear. The wages of omission were misadventure or death. Creatures that did not react on such happenings would tend to disappear. There was no Innate Idea of Causality, whatever that may be, "realising itself" obscurely in thought! The attitude was dominantly practical. Expectation and interest concurred with instinct, or psycho-physical impulse, to *act*. The practical interests that moved



our ancestor answer to the practical interests which support the scientific reconstruction of Nature to-day. Nature as disappearing into abstract "uniformities of causation" is, at best, a mean thing, devoid of all the glory and life of the presented show. It resembles, what I have urged before, a map for which we have bartered a country. It has certainly some theoretical worth; still there must be few students of science who have not asked themselves at times whether this abstract kind of knowledge, *considered simply as knowledge*, is such as to repay pursuit. The desert of scientific generalisation is, however, made habitable owing to the rich oases of descriptive matter which dot its expanse.

#### CAUSES AND EFFECTS ARE NOT SEPARATE FACTS

§ 12. We are now ready to take a step forward. It is remarked by Hegel that "the rain (the cause) and the wet (the effect) are the self-same existing water. In point of form, the cause (rain) is dissipated or lost *in the effect* (wet)."<sup>1</sup> Even if we stick to the surface of things, we shall find that the practical man's isolation of causes and effects, as separates parted by time, cannot be maintained. The totality of the conditions, or "cause," being fully present, the "effect" is present too!

In discussing "causal" relations in Nature, we must steer clear of the intellectualism which regards appearances as the meeting-place of "Universals," "Laws," or "Principles" which are somehow realised, manifested, or exemplified in particular facts. Nature,

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. 230.



at bottom, is not an incrassation or precipitate of Reason. It is fundamentally alogical in character. The generalising or "law-giving" reason is one of those novelties which arise in connection with finite conscious individuals such as we. The Time-process is genuine: Reality in its changing flow *is* Time. And in this Flux, where progress can be, and where the imperfect passes ever into new forms, Reason with its "Universals" is developed and, pending the coming of a superior kind of knowledge, will hold its own. Its limitations, however, leap to the eye. It never exists except fragmentarily—never stands before us as a solid and complete whole. We are always, like the miser, counting over our money to be sure that we have got it. It is *comprehensive*, but the meshes of its net are so big that what seems to be caught slips through them. It shows pitiful, in fact, before the expanse of concrete Feeling. If anything, in virtue of an immanent dialectic, *could* pass into its opposite, that thing surely would be the fetish men have exalted and worshipped as the IDEA or system of Reason!

#### THE UNIVERSAL POSTULATE

§ 13. Bain, in discussing "Nature's Uniformity" (which, for him, covers more than uniformities of causation), offers us a *Universal Postulate*, "What has uniformly been in the past will be in the future," and advances this as the ultimate major premise of Induction. Experience does not prove it, because that is of what has been. He observes that "the assumption is an ample justification of the inductive operation as a process of real inference. Without it we can do nothing; with it we can do anything. Our only error is in proposing to give any reason or justification

of it, to treat it otherwise than as begged at the outset. If there be a reason, it is not theoretical, but practical. Without the assumption we could not take the smallest steps in practical matters; we could not pursue any object or end in life. Unless the future is to reproduce the past, it is an enigma, a labyrinth. Our natural prompting is to *assume* such identity, to believe it first, and prove it afterwards.”<sup>1</sup> Those in love with abstract proving, which consists in basing *proposition* on proposition till an indemonstrable “axiomatic” proposition is reached, repudiate this Postulate. They proclaim that, failing the assured truth of the major premise of Induction, the generalisations of science lack universality and necessity. We need hardly entertain alarm at this prospect. What if these generalisations are not eternal verities after all? What if Reality were to be altered and leave them all behind? They have their day, subserve our uses; even, to some poor extent, feeding our theoretical interests. But there is no call to take them too seriously. We need not condemn the Postulate in the interest of abstractions like these.

Bain attaches undue importance to this Postulate. Few men act and think with reference to assumptions of this kind—few stand on the reflective level where the Postulate has its place. Men, as a rule, just forecast events and act; concrete psychical processes supplying all the guidance that is required. Nature is such that it does not disappoint them. It is altogether too much to import this Postulate into “the smallest steps” which we take in practical matters.

But, after all, this is a minor matter. A more

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, i. 274.

serious objection relates to the expression "Nature's Uniformity." The Postulate, in the regard of Causality, is best expressed as, "Given like conditions, there will occur like events." Nature has undergone revolutionary changes, and no doubt will undergo more. There is no Uniformity predicable of Nature, taken as a vague whole. There was a fire-mist once, and now there are green fields!

#### THE SUPPORT OF THE POSTULATE

§ 14. In this latter form the Postulate is doubtless of use. It embodies an expectation which, in a *certain field* of reality at least, will almost certainly be made good. It works in fact, but we have yet to answer the inquiry — Why? Well, the support of the Postulate—that which enables us to use it without being disappointed—must be sought in the process of the centres. And here what has been does not, strictly speaking, recur. All content is in a flux. The conditions of an event are themselves events, and when complete *are* what, in its mediated form, we isolate and call the effect. And *like* conditions pass thus into *like* events. Like contents in coming together behave in like ways: this is why the Postulate works. There is a DYNAMIC here, and we have considered already what its leading features may be (§ 7, Penetration; § 8, Dialectic and Natural Process; § 10, Resistance and the Minor Centres). A certain agreement emerges in the conflict; the order of Nature expressing the stubbornness with which the allogical holds its ground. Inasmuch, however, as contents in general and in detail are changing, the Nature-that-is-to-be will shake off most of the appearances that confront us now.



So far we have had the minor centres chiefly in view. There remain complications to face as we proceed, but for the moment we have come to this: the Postulate works by favour of the minor centres. Mill observes that "the universe, so far as known to us, is *so constituted*, that whatever is true in any one case is true in all cases of a certain description." Quite so; and "*so constituted*" presents the riddle which we have been endeavouring, no doubt most inadequately, to solve. Thus we have dealt with the problem of *qualitative* change. And we can understand why a change of quality, flowing out of certain conditions, bears a resemblance to another such change flowing out of *like* conditions. Contents  $x$  and  $Y$  in coming together collapse into a third which is the embodiment of both. Space is co-existent diversity, and diversities that no longer *co-exist* have to fuse. Each aspect is present, and yet not present, in the result. If, anon, *like* contents  $x$  and  $Y$  come together, they will collapse in a *like* way. They, too, are self-conserving, and, by hypothesis, no extraneous factors are introduced. In fine, natural appearances do not attest *interlacing* "*Laws*": mere generalities these, whose home is in human heads. They bear witness to a veritable compulsion born of the clash of *rival Might*s. It is from the STRUGGLE of mutually encroaching powers that spring the order and eternal freshness of Nature. The generalisation called the "Conservation of Energy" is the abstract-mechanical expression of this dynamism viewed in a partial way and from the outside.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bain observes (*Logic*, ii. 20-21) that "in every instance of causation there is a putting forth of force," and he regards the Conservation-Law as the "highest expression of Cause and Effect." This, however, is just what it is not. Force (Part II.



The Postulate which we have been considering seems less secure when we leave Nature and pass to consider the psychologic processes of major centres such as our own. There has arisen the issue of Freedom *v.* Determinism in connection with the familiar appearances classed as Will. Those, however, who reject Determinism need not quarrel with the *Postulate*—a serviceable assumption, which, they will admit, is usually born out by the real. Their attitude towards the *Axiom* of Causality will be hostile.

#### THE MINOR CENTRES AND LIFE

§ 15. Metaphysics has no call to do more than indicate the *general way* in which the basis of Nature should be conceived. Problems bearing on the number of kinds of minor centres and centre-complexes; on the rise, development, and fate of minor centre-complexes, and so forth, fall outside its sphere, and must be confronted in sight of facts (not working hypotheses!) gathered from special sciences. Note, however, that in inquiry of this sort the horizon steadily recedes.

Suppose that we consider a minor centre-complex, *e.g.* a "mercury-atom," as it is active now. We will ignore its possible history, and take it as a developed fact. Can such a centre-complex be said to live? Not in the conventionally restricted acceptation of the term. The objects which *biologists* group as "living," to wit, Chap. III. § 5) and Energy, or "capacity for doing work," rank only as conceptual entities. They are useless to metaphysics, which wants statements of fact about Nature, and not merely ways or devices of dealing with it. The "highest expression" of Cause and Effect is that which is most *adequate* to the reality of the *continuous transition*.

the organisms of plants and animals, show characteristics (of cell-structure, nutrition, assimilation, reproduction, etc.) which the simpler centre-complex cannot possess. But, properly speaking, we are not in a position to say where organisms begin or end. "Can we assume, because we have found out the nature of some organisms, that we have exhausted that of all? Have we an ascertained essence outside of which no variation is possible?"<sup>1</sup> The contention would, of course, be absurd. Organisms, subhuman and superhuman, of which we know nothing, may obtain. And of subhuman organisms of which we know something, the atomic centre-complex is assuredly one. It is a concrete relative whole which actively maintains itself among, and against, like wholes and *contra mundum*. It is important not to interpret this saying amiss. Merely to live is not to be conscious. Our bodies are alive when we are unconscious. The lowest animals and plants barely, perhaps, rise out of the sub-conscious at all. The atomic centre-complex, we may suppose, lives normally far below the level of conscious being.<sup>2</sup>

It is best to discard the phrase "inorganic Nature," which tends to convey the impression that we confront existence which is mechanical, "dead," and "inert," and to speak of "relatively unorganised" Nature. The ordinarily accepted living organism does not incorporate many sorts of chemical "elements," but its *complications*, as regards the relations of those which it does embody, are extreme. It is in the assimilation of these few "elements" that the most remarkable property of this organism is displayed.

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide*, however, § 4.

The result of that assimilation, says Hegel, "is not, as in the chemical process, a neutral product in which the independence of the two confronting sides is merged; but the living being shows itself as overlapping its antithesis, which cannot withstand its power." On the other hand, the "elements" assimilated do not come empty-handed to their fate; for only a few can be organised in this way, and these bring the requisite qualities to the process. The *mights* yield to the superior *Might*, but, while annexed, contribute their own content to the result.

### MY WORLD OF SHADOWS

§ 16. The need for caution in discussing the minor centres will be emphasised by the consideration that is to follow. I am in direct touch with an indefinitely vast realm, *but only at a point*. That point, regarded from the outside and as it would appear to another percipient, is the brain.

I will open this discussion by wading through a difficulty.

### IS A MAN'S WORLD IN HIS BRAIN?

We were considering some way back (§ 3) what happens when I sensate. And the answer, or part-answer, was that I am aware of content of which *the brain* momentarily consists. Now this answer raises a difficulty. It seems to convert my perceived world into something literally inside my head. And I recall that Schopenhauer did call this world a "cerebral phantasmagoria." I mind me, also, of the words of the writer of a remarkable novel: "The whole cosmos

is in a man's brain—as much of it, at least, as a man's brain will hold; perhaps it is nowhere else.”<sup>1</sup> *What now of the “man's brain”?* For this is just an object among ordinary objects for the anatomist: an object which presupposes æons of natural process which preceded it in time. The situation may be stated thus. On the one hand, the brain is said to *contain* Nature; on the other hand, the brain is found to exist merely *within* Nature. Our own solution has long ago become clear. But it may not be amiss to state it very briefly once more.

The “man's body,” as the anatomist perceives it, is a *mediated* (§ 8, Dialectic and Natural Process) appearance on the same level as sticks and stones. It is strictly peculiar to the anatomist's experience. But we saw that Subjective Idealism is not the whole truth. All such appearance is relative to process which happens outside the anatomist's circle—is the *Shadow* of indefinitely richer fact which obtains in the continuous basis of Nature. There are as many Shadow-bodies as there are different percipients, but all the Shadow-bodies point to the same richer fact. It is *this* latter fact which in its direct, unmediated activity furnishes through certain cerebral minor centres the “cosmos” of “the man” discussed.

There is thus no difficulty in explaining the situation on the lines of Real-Idealism. It is only requisite to be careful in what senses we use our terms. Thus “body” or “organism” may stand for two different—(1) the Shadow-object or (2) the richer fact. And “Nature,” again, may be taken to mean either (1) one of the Shadow-object-natures peculiar to this or that

<sup>1</sup> George du Maurier in *Peter Ibbetson*.



percipient or (2) a continuous Enveloping Order in which all the percipients alike are immersed.

#### SHADOW-OBJECTS AND "NECESSARY CONNECTION" IN OUR EXPERIENCE

This mention of Shadow-objects has an important bearing on a worn controversy as to "necessity" of connection in the contents of our experience. It must suffice to state the point very briefly.

In discussing the stone which moves the stick (§ 10, Resistance, etc.) I urged that stone and stick mediate for my perception process indefinitely richer and more complex than what I receive. The *perceived* stone moving the *perceived* stick is a succession of appearances for consciousness. Those who want to understand *fully* why this succession occurs must not only consider my perceiving; must not talk idly about "categories," "relating intelligence," and so forth: *they must go out towards the continuous basis of Nature wherein lies the primal DYNAMIC which is echoed for me.* Writers have discussed the "nexus" of stone and stick as if the sole difficulty were to understand how the *perceptions* hang together *in my knowledge*. Their hanging together for me is only a notification, so to speak, of what takes place in the Enveloping Order without. The character of the Dynamic in this order has been already dealt with.

#### THE OUTWARD AND INWARD SHOWING OF THE BRAIN AND THE SUB-CONSCIOUS

§ 17. I arise along with a cosmos of shadows, and that cosmos is presentation within the brain [meaning

No. (2)]. In this cosmos are, or may be, the brains [meaning No. (1)] of my fellow-men and animals; my own brain [meaning No. (1)] would show here if the skull could be opened and its contents reflected into my visual field. We are all shut up within these Shadow-worlds; in the Natures [meaning No. (1)] peculiar to ourselves which we severally confront. And yet not wholly shut up! A shadow exists partly through that which throws it. That which is relative to a shadow-object of my world is also, to an extent, within it. I need not dwell upon this aspect of the subject; it has been very fully dealt with before. That which is mediated through other centres is itself more or less in the mediated result.

#### THE ABYSS OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS

My brain, then, may have an *outward mediated show* as a Shadow-object. It has also an *inward direct show* in the consciousness which it serves to support. *But that which rises on to the conscious level is as nothing to that which remains below it.* Thus my inward show at this moment reveals nothing answering to the structures and functions which anatomists and physiologists discuss. It discloses, along with my ever-present "organic feelings," a blue lake bounded by snowy, cloud-wreathed mountains, and, anon, the Shadow-objects known as the table and paper on which I write. This visual show (I ignore associated feeling) is content upborne in minor centres of the occipital cortex; but what is it beside the unrevealed contents even of these? The vast sun *Alpha Lyrae* appears to the astronomer as a point. I am not aware of a minor centre even as that. It is lost in the shadowy and confused blur of sense—is a

*petite perception* whose contribution does not stand out. Nevertheless, the minor centre may be an *Alpha Lyræ* in itself, complex and wonderful beyond the dreams of romance. And the related centres? The nucleated part of a neurone consists of innumerable centres like this. And the amazing centre-complex whose tenuous outward show is called the body? My Consciousness has assuredly a poor kingdom! It is just a spark which lights dimly a fragmentary portion of an abyss. But, again, it makes the darkness, theoretically speaking, visible. The abyss is, at any rate, existent fact.

The life of the cortex [meaning No. 2], then, is not to be grasped in its completeness. Neither the outward mediated show nor the inward direct show, nor, again, both taken together, are even tolerably adequate to what we called the "richer fact." The truth about the cortex is to be reached neither from without nor from within, so far as direct appearances, unsupplemented by inference, base the propositions which it is desired to frame.

#### WHY DOES SO LITTLE CONTENT RISE OUT OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS?

§ 18. The Brain, as Inward Show, supplies the more obvious content of my conscious life.<sup>1</sup> But now note a serious difficulty. Why does *this* content rise on to the conscious level at all? Why, for instance, do colours, *and not all the other contents* of the occipital centres as well, reach the light? Why does this meagre display alone emerge from the night of the sub-conscious? Can we moot any hypothesis which is

<sup>1</sup> Note the reservation, as it will concern us anon.



at all illuminative of the facts? I am not sure that we can get at the whole truth, but an attempt in this direction can surely be made.

#### STRUGGLE AND THE RISE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The *rise* of consciousness in connection with organisms was controlled by Natural Selection. The latter is a name for various, and for the most part unspecified, conditions which eliminate unfit organisms and leave the others to breed. The "variations" on which Natural Selection "operates" have to be given. Thus the "variation" consciousness (or its foregleam) must be given in some form or forms before Natural Selection can work.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, no primitively given form of consciousness would have persisted if it had not been of practical use. Physiologically speaking, there is high expenditure involved in conscious reaction; hence organisms needlessly conscious would have been handicapped in the struggle for life. A dim consciousness may have appeared, and have been eradicated, again and again. It had to compensate by its utility for its cost; a *mere awareness* of no service to reactions would not have profited at all. Conscious activity had to emerge as a slave in the service of body. A practical fate determined the lines on which the initial conscious unfolding had to proceed.

<sup>1</sup> Darwin says of Instinct that "if really of no importance for the struggle for life, it could not be formed or modified by natural selection." The same thing might be said of conscious activity as a whole. But we must not fail to note that Natural Selection is a very partial way of looking at the facts. It does not include the conditions which produce the favourable variations, but serves just to eliminate the organisms in which these variations do NOT occur.



What sort of content would pass over into consciousness? That which was of use in the struggle for life. Consider a fairly advanced animal organism—that of a primeval fish which is developing a brain. It would be not only useless, but hurtful (because wasteful), for this *entire brain* to become conscious and reveal its submerged life. Utility favours content guiding movements on which the integrity of the fish organism depends. Neutral presentation, very poorly differentiated, will arise. And pleasures and pains, answering as they do to furthered and hindered brain-content (Part II. Chap. V. § 7) are bound to appear, must be *felt*,<sup>1</sup> must be important practically, and are, therefore, secure. The fish-consciousness, however, is sunk in the immediacy of presentation and echoes of presentation. In a much higher organism, say that of an ape, the immediacy has been left, and a differencing, still incomplete, of subject and object takes place. Here, also, a practical fate has decreed that the *contents* of the consciousness are, in the main, just such as subserve the body's career. Its modes of sensating, remembering, expecting, enjoying, suffering, etc., like the organic movements, have been furthered and fixed by utility—by the worth of these to the body in the struggle for life. But at this stage, be it noted, a very important *novelty* has dawned. The conscious activity, from a physiologist's point of view, seems just a guide to action. But this is a partial way of conceiving the facts. For the ape the conscious processes are clearly something more—can be experienced as ends in themselves and not merely as means. The beast *suns* and enjoys *itself*. This aspect of conscious process was heralded obscurely in the mere "awareness" of the fish. It is the aspect which

<sup>1</sup> An unfelt *pleasure* or *pain* is nonsense.

assumes such remarkable importance in the psychological development of Man. The practical side of conscious process in man is quite subordinated in certain pursuits, *e.g.* metaphysics, which he affects. Conscious process forms a novel kingdom within the sphere where it appeared first as a slave.<sup>1</sup> But a consideration of this matter just now would lead us astray.

#### "VARIATIONS" COME TO NATURAL SELECTION

We have seen that Natural Selection must have counted for much during the rise and early development of conscious being. Of itself, however, it evolves nothing, for the all-important "variations" are not made by, but come to, it. A vine has to grow before you can prune it. The foregleams of consciousness have to appear before they can be furthered or suppressed. Natural Selection in the sphere of organisms tended at the outset to suppress consciousness when unprofitable to body. And it leaves the origin of conscious process in bodies unexplained.

#### WHENCE THE VARIATION CONSCIOUSNESS?

We have, accordingly, to state more fully the conditions from which consciousness flows. And, more particularly, we have to inquire into the rise of conscious process within our (human) Centres as allied with bodies. We have dwelt upon the minor centres, and we have said something about the continuous basis of Nature. We have not, so far, understood *how* my Centre is aware of content in the

<sup>1</sup> We have, in the mythological language of von Hartmann, the progressive liberation of the "Idea" from the "Will."

minor centres of the cortex, and *how* what is popularly described as the general alliance of the "psychical" and the "physical" is brought about.

We pass, then, to consider the rise of "*my*" *Centre* as allied with body. Implicated with this subject are various important issues which we have had no opportunity of discussing adequately up till now.

## CHAPTER V

### THE UNFOLDING IN MY CENTRE

#### CONSCIOUSNESS NO MERE BY-PRODUCT

§ 1. IN the beginning, when organisms respond adequately to external relations by general contractions and expansions, it suffices merely to live. To live consciously would be no advantage, but a handicap, in the struggle for existence. A wide interval lies between organisms of this relatively simple sort and organisms which show a regular sentient life. And it is a far cry from bare sentience to the "consciousness" which we attribute to a rat or a dog. But we seem in a position to make a general statement such as this. "Consciousness" becomes of service where adjustments have to be complex, varied, and often more or less novel. Even barely differentiated presentation, suffused with rude pleasure and pain, would help to *point* the discharges of that unstable structure, the central nerve-mechanism, aright. More especially the *novel* sort of adjustments would be bettered by this guidance. Take note here that, if "consciousness" is useful, the popular materialisms which dub it a "by-product" or mere "accompaniment" of neurosis cannot hold. These theories flout common sense, for they imply that experiences like willing, pleasure and pain, etc.,



are nothing to the body and never influence its reactions in any way. In the face of such results we are to surmise that some naïve metaphysician has blundered. Shall I press the point? Is it the body, *mechanically conceived*, that cerebrates out and writes this paragraph, while "I," a "by-product" or "accompaniment," which feigns a causal efficiency, look idly on? There is absurdity here, and the metaphysics from which it is deduced is surely unsound. There is no longer cause to treat such thinking seriously. Our preceding results have, in fact, emptied such materialism of meaning.

#### THE CONDITIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

§ 2. Consciousness is a form only of psychical activity—a level of enhanced reality to which Nature, or rather certain aspects of Nature, can rise. In the case of the human brain it concurs with what Romanes has called "ganglionic friction," viz. with that hesitancy in the cortex-processes which marks considerable disturbance or breaking-up of nerve-stuff. It tends to fade out from such rapid processes as are implicated with habitual, secondarily automatic, etc., action. Consciousness is the Inward Direct Show (Part II. Chap. IV. § 18) of that "richer fact" which has its Outward Mediated Show as intense activity in the cortex. It illuminates a tract of the organism [Part II. Chap. IV. § 18, meaning No. (2)] the indefinite complexity of which lies, for the most part, in the night of the sub-conscious. It is an *intense life* of processes continuous with processes which go on in the dark. And we seem further enabled to suggest how this intense life or being comes to happen. The complication of the organic body, chemically considered, is remarkable. And in the central nerve-stuff, which

is highly unstable, this complication is carried to an extreme degree. We have here an extraordinary complex of interrelated *minor centres*. Let a visual appulse come to this quarter. There ensue multitudinous invasions and penetrations (Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 8 and 9) among these centres, a merging of spatial differences, *hence a veritable exaltation or local increase of being by fusion*, and the brain-tract involved is momentarily raised on to a more intense level. This intensifying of brain-life is not great enough to reveal more than the surface of the processes at work (Chap. IV. § 18). What I know through it is little—a mere glimpse, so to say, of the treasures buried in the brain. It is only those aspects of the minor centres that are invaded, altered, and intensified by the appulse which are *presented*, and even they come blurred and confused.<sup>1</sup> But the little that is presented is on a scale that suffices for practical needs. Presentation on the Demiurgic scale is not required for the adaptive adjustments of a body such as this.

#### IS CONSCIOUSNESS ALLIED ONLY WITH THE CORTEX ?

§ 3. Does consciousness light nothing but activities in the cortex? Well, the Shadow-object known outwardly as the cortex presents an extreme complication which, interpreted as we have interpreted it here, indicates peculiarly interrelated minor centres. The cortex conditions are specially favourable to the rise of consciousness. But, having said this, we shall do well not to dogmatise. My body may be a place of conscious Centres other than the minor centres of which so much mention has been made. It is just a

<sup>1</sup> Leibnitz was right in viewing sense as "confused," but not as confused *understanding* !

question whether the conditions render life intense enough to rise to the conscious level. Some or many of the organic functions may be consciously guided in this way. The dissociated "secondary selves" whose existence has been revealed by experiment, hypnotic and other, serve to prepare us to receive such an idea.<sup>1</sup> Nay, even as regards what is called "inorganic," but better "relatively unorganised," Nature, I must stand firmly by what I have urged before. We do not know where sentient powers, in the widest sense of the term, begin or end (Part II. Chap. III. § 13). And there may be disturbances and moods of Nature wherein the very elemental forces approach sentient being; so that, perhaps, mythopœic man has not been altogether a dreamer of dreams. I need not dwell on the striking reflections to which this possibility gives rise: enough that an idealistic dynamism forces the possibility on our view. If the life (Part II. Chap. IV. § 16) of Nature is from time to time, and under special conditions, raised to the intense requisite level, we are in the presence of elemental forces whose character primitive man has not entirely misunderstood.

We humans are allied with the cortex. And life in this latter is not of sufficient intensity to rise into

<sup>1</sup> These "secondary selves" are not, of course, normal; but it is worth noting that unawareness of them on the part of the ordinary "waking" consciousness goes for nothing. The ordinary "waking" consciousness answers to a relatively insulated tract of the cortex, and *must* be ignorant. It is remarkable that there was one large animal, the build of which suggests the coexistence of two important normal conscious Centres in one body very strongly. The Dinosaurian Stegosaur had in the sacral region a very much larger chamber than that formed by its skull. The head consciousness may, all unawares, have had a useful ally in this sacral consciousness which helped to co-ordinate the movements of legs and tail.



consciousness prior to those appulses which are conveyed along special afferent nerves, and which yield (what reflection calls) the first impressions of "sense." The appulses may be relative to changes, visceral and other, within the body, or to changes outside it. But failing them and the heightening of cortex-content which ensues, there is no consciousness. On other cosmic levels such *specially conveyed* appulses may not be requisite; in fact, the devices with which we are familiar may be peculiar to the restricted and undeveloped system in which we arise. The facts classed as Telepathy naturally arouse interest in this regard. They show that presentations may reach the cortex quite independently of the recognised channels of sense. Appulse, in fine, must not be considered as necessarily conveyed by arrangements such as our bodies show. Such arrangements, indeed, seem incidents of local biological evolution on this planet—contrivances of no more *cosmic* significance than legs and arms.

#### HOW IS "MY" CENTRE RELATED TO THE MINOR CENTRES OF THE CORTEX?

§ 4. And now we confront a question the final handling of which has been deferred, perhaps, too long. What is the relation of "my" Centre to the minor centres of the cortex? The relation, if such it can be called, is a very intimate one. When certain changes occur in the cortex, my Centre has its content of perceptions, memories, imagery, etc.; and when these changes grow less lively or are lacking, it loses content or ceases to be conscious at all. We must be careful not to mistake the Centre for a monad, or independent individual spiritual substance, which



happens to attach itself temporarily to "this" brain. The cortex, of course, is no mere "instrument" on which a super-celestial "ego" deigns to "play."<sup>1</sup> Consciousness illuminates and implicates *the working and substance of the cortex itself*. And some who have followed our metaphysics up to this point might incline, indeed, to answer the question about the Centre as follows:—

They might say: "The cortex of the anatomist is the Outward Show of complexly interrelated minor centres. Good. Well, your major Centre is just *derived* from the activities of these minor centres—is the *sum* of such happenings in them as rise to the conscious level."

This seems, at first sight, a likely hypothesis, but it is not, withal, true, *i.e.* adequate to the Real. My Centre is not a mere "*sum*." My Centre does, indeed, show the "happenings," but that is an aspect of the situation and not the complete fact. My Centre is the happenings and *more*—is *a fragment of that continuous ground in which the minor centres and their happenings obtain*. The considerations already urged (Part II. Chap. II.) in support of the unity of this Centre are once more relevant. This unity is a genuine experience which leaps to the eye. The "Wholeness" of sentiency is as much *given* as any aspect of it which we call a sensation or idea. There is a Whole-Feeling just as there is a feeling of a colour or a burn (Part II. Chap. II. §§ 3, 8, 9). We cannot

<sup>1</sup> I am assuming the reader's conversance with the physiological facts bearing on this matter. "Only those unacquainted with the facts," observes von Hartmann, "can remain outside their influence" (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*, ii. 62, Coupland's translation). Quite so.



ignore, but must accept, this "Wholeness" as empirical fact. What, now, is the standing of the minor centres? Well, we found that they are not monads, but changeful relative wholes which may be likened to "travelling eddies in a stream." At once all becomes clear. My Centre is the greater reality which contains the lesser reals. *It is the large eddy in the stream which carries some of the minor "travelling eddies" within it.* The continuity of the basis of Nature, as well as the discreteness, is revealed in the conscious Feeling-Complex where I abide.

#### THE NOVEL MIGHT

Thus it is the mother-stuff or ground that appears in the unity of my Centre. There is emergent in my Feeling-Complex a wider fact in which the aspects of the minor centres are subordinated, though not suppressed. There has arisen a novel focus of activity—a conscious power which, working as a relative whole, strives to dominate and make use of the content which it finds within itself. We shall have occasion to note the working of this novel *Might* as we proceed.

We have now to consider a variety of interesting problems presented by the rise and development of this MAJOR CENTRE. It will be best to begin by offering some further account of those phases of experience which are known as sensations.

#### SENSATIONS

§ 5. The history of my Consciousness, as we saw (Part I. Chap. II. § 7 (2)), opens with a confused presentedness in which the subject-object distinction has not been made. The "knower" and the "known"

rise, not out of the particular or universal, but out of the Indefinite; out of a neutrum of feeling which comes undivided and whole. It is struggle, we agreed, which first forces the rudimentary subject, or "that which feels," and the rudimentary object, or "that which is felt," apart. And sensations as primitively felt are only phases of a total experience that *stand out*. Sensations, again, as *we* adult experiencers reflect on them, have lost their original form. They have been lifted out of their context, isolated, named, and made topics for thinking—show clearly the work of analysis and abstraction. Man is prone to use such abstracts to explain that from which they are abstracted, and, of course, sets himself an impracticable task. The revolt against sensationalism, the theory which derives experience from *particular* sensations and their *particular* echoes or ideas, associated in various ways, is justified. On the other hand, the foes of sensationalism are apt to set up an equally unsatisfactory idol in its place. We get the cult of the "Universal," which leads to Logical Realism—the attempt to exhibit reality as rational thought. The particular is taken over uncritically and found defective, and then appeal is made to the universal "Thought"-determinations to remedy the defects. These Universals cope with a situation that really exists only in books. There are no merely particular original sensations or feelings, whose defects have *somehow* to be made good. We shall have more to say on this head anon.

#### THE CULT OF THE UNIVERSAL

There have always been schools which treat feeling as something from which the philosophic mind, intent



only on Universals, should escape. This view was zealously espoused by Plato. And an echo of this false mysticism occurs in Hegel. This thinker styles the supersensible character of his categories an "excellence,"<sup>1</sup> bids the logician-ontologist renounce even the most tenuous abstractions from sense,<sup>2</sup> sets the "interests of reason" (most arid of realms!) above the "richness and variety" of Nature,<sup>3</sup> and leaves ignored the main difficulties respecting the sensible-system and our position in it. The Universal is "neither seen nor heard; its existence is the secret known only to the mind." When, however, I strive to find this existence, unalloyed with feeling, my efforts are vain. I confront propositions and terms from which the breath of life has fled—mere words which imply, withal, represented visual-auditory-motor feelings, and lack, therefore, the genuine supersensible "excellence" that is required. Can we soar into a feelingless vacuum of thought? Let those who experiment see to it that they really leave feeling behind! For ourselves, we decline to flout "sense." We see no ground for the belief in, and certainly no possible metaphysical use for, pure thought. If pure thought were dynamic, if it had an immanent movement of its own, and if, further, it had power to extrude or precipitate feeling, then, indeed, the cult of the Universal would be important, the dialectical "labour of the notion," perhaps, the chief interest of metaphysics. *But failing this self-sufficiency of pure thought*, belief in which can hardly be taken seriously to-day, there exists no inducement to look slightly on the deliverances of "sense."

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. 77.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.



THE TRUE CHARACTER OF "PURE" THOUGHT OR  
REASON AS DIVORCED FROM FEELING

In verity the solid "interests of reason" lie outside itself—in the sphere of feeling and the felt. A rational system, when of more than practical use, is a surrogate for what cannot be adequately intuited or felt. It is embodied in propositions; and propositions, failing reference to feeling, are nothing worth. We cannot say with Geiger that "language created reason." Felt relations of feeling are presupposed. Subsequently, these felt abstracts are fixed, and regularly thrust upon attention, by linguistic device. But, again, these abstracts need not hold attention at all. In this case propositional thinking gives rise to an algebra of words, and *seems then to subsist in a medium from which feeling has been finally expelled*. Words used in this way are pure reason, and not its mere "vehicle" or support. They possess, withal, no intrinsic theoretical worth. If we are to justify them, we must go outside the propositional world. We must inquire, in the end, whether they have served to direct attention to appearances which can be presentatively or representatively felt.

SENSATIONS ARE NOT RE-SHUFFLED UNITS OF  
SENTIENCY

§ 6. There are theories which regard sensations as made up of units of some elementary kind of feeling; qualitative sensible variety being traced back to like "subjective faces" of "nervous shocks." These like simples are conceived as differently "integrated" and combined, and therefore as yielding

different results.<sup>1</sup> This is a form of the Fallacy of Simplicity. The Centre, with whose sensations, speaking abstractly, we deal, does not consist of units. It is needless to repeat the discussions which have gone before. And simplifications which appeal to "nerve-processes" refer us to the indefinitely varied and complex at once. Such processes are the outward show of happenings in the *continuous* basis of Nature—happenings which are not mere *carriers* of psychical fact, but radically and entirely psychical through and through. Each new nervous process is a new psychical complex, a fragment only of which rises to the conscious level. The novel is always arising within the cortex: there is a relativity in which minor centre invades centre—a relativity in which, here as elsewhere, fresh results must ceaselessly emerge. But the centres bring their differences to the relativity—not a sterile sameness from which no fresh product could spring. Enough has been said to justify us in passing on.

#### PLEASURES AND PAINS

§ 7. Pleasures and pains present no difficulty: they declare their meaning frankly enough. The right note was struck by Aristotle: pleasure is the accompaniment of the free realisation or unimpeded activity of a power, natural or acquired, sensory or intellectual. More accurately, with Kant, *pleasure is the feeling of furtherance, pain of the hindrance, of life.*<sup>2</sup> This view, which seems unassailable, accords

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. "Substance of Mind."

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes, with an eye on the body, had regarded pleasure as allied with motion "*helping vital action*," pain with motion *hindering* it; and some such view, unless memory deceives me, is

excellently with what has gone before. We appropriate the aperçu, as follows:—

All the Centres yet discussed, including, as we have seen, the minor centres, must be admitted to *live*: they are relative wholes which maintain themselves along with, and against, like wholes and *contra mundum*. Pleasure attends the furthering, developing, expansion of the life, or, if you will, activity of a Centre; pain colours this life when it is hindered, obstructed, starved, repressed. Can we speak of these vital feelings as happening in a minor centre? Yes; for they are certainly present in the *minor centres* of the cortex, and, doubtless, accompany minor centre processes, when sufficiently intense, elsewhere. But a pleasure or pain, however fleeting, however incapable of recall, belongs not to the sub-conscious, but is *felt*; hence, in the having of such feelings even minor centres show foregleams of *sentient* life.

There may obtain a measure of activity which is neutral in respect of pleasure and pain; the furthering and the hindering of this being pleasant or the reverse. When the *relations of the centres* are such that furtherance is marked, pleasure will predominate; when hindrance is marked, pain will be the commanding fact. Accordingly there may obtain cosmic levels whereon it is normal to experience more pleasure than pain; others in which pain is much more prominent than pleasure. The activity of a centre is in no espoused by Hume. In respect of organisms, *such as concern biology*, it is abundantly clear that pleasures go along with "an increase, and states of pain with an abatement, of some or all the vital functions" (Bain). (*Cf. also Spencer, Principles of Psychology*, i. 279). We here are looking beyond this relatively narrow field of "organic" life (*cf. Part II. Chap. IV. § 16*).

sense foredoomed to pain:<sup>1</sup> it is neutral in tone or positively pleasurable when unrepressed. We shall recur to this topic when the case for Pessimism has to be considered.

The pleasantness of a sensation is adjectival, and inseparable in fact from the appearance which it marks. And pleasant sensations, of course, differ. But pleasures have this in common—they all alike attest the quickening of life. To this extent they are a measure of worth. Pleasant sensations and emotions of all sorts mark increased life, and are, *so far*, desirable and to be pursued as Good. They become relatively bad when their occurring mars an activity which is more important than they. The orgie of the savage is good—for the savage. The drunken joys of Porson, taken by themselves, are good; they are bad in view of ulterior and fuller satisfactions, personal and social, which they exclude, and of the various positively unpleasant consequences which they may entail.

#### PERCEPTION AND THE CATEGORIES

§ 8. My adult experience, implicated all the while with the cortex, shows the opposition of Subject and Object, of feeler (thought being a form of feeling) and felt. Nevertheless, there was a stage when this opposition did not exist. It was preceded by a Neutrum, and is even now remade from moment to moment as I live. This much restated, I have to offer some remarks on a topic which, so far, has been shelved. Does this sundering of Subject and Object

<sup>1</sup> Man, we may say, is fatally happy when his powers, sensuous and other, natural and acquired, are active, without thwarting, in the measure of their importance.



presuppose what have been called Categories? For the present it is convenient to discuss this matter with the external Object principally in view. I have to ask, then, whether the development of my perceived objective world (which, it will be recalled, is peculiar to my Centre) requires the hypothesis of Categories. And first I will say something as to the void which these famous Categories were invented to fill.

#### EVOLUTION OF THE CATEGORIES

Hume seeks to "loosen" all aspects of my conscious experience. He resolves both subject and object into separately existent reals. There is no Ego; there is just a flux of felt discontinuous "impressions" and "ideas." Now unitary reals of this kind cannot, as we have seen, be combined into, or result in, a *new* unitary real or *consciousness*: they are abstractions of the study, and infertile at that. Hume rightly rejects the Ego-thing, and he rightly avers that there are no elements present to experience which are not more or less clearly felt. But he errs when he assumes that the felt is *discontinuous*. And this mistake involves him in difficulties. Thus, to say that "impressions" are separate is to dub them irrelative. He contends, withal, that it is from the "*manners*" of appearing of "impressions" that we draw our ideas of Space and Time.<sup>1</sup> Irrelative units are now treated as relative! Hume's entire treatment of what he calls "natural" and "philosophical" relations breaks down: his initial assumption renders the task too severe.

<sup>1</sup> The "idea of extension is nothing but a copy of these coloured points and of the manner of their appearance." This view holds good against the theory which makes of space a mysterious frame containing "impressions." But it presupposes, of course, a relativity in which the impressions come.

He fails, as observed by Huxley, to grasp the elementary character of impressions of relation.<sup>1</sup> What, then, is the secret conviction which supports him amid the chaos into which he falls? I take the answer to be this. In the background of his thought is the belief that the relating of the *psychically* separate "impressions" is done *by body*. He has studied Hobbes to some purpose. And he has, in at least one place, committed himself to the view that "motion may be, and actually is, the cause of thought and perception."<sup>2</sup> He is in love with the notion of *organic synthesis*, and is not dismayed at the difficulties which beset the psychical side of his problem.

Dealing with perceptual reality, which is the focus of our present interest, Kant seeks to amend Hume. Hume had muddled the inquiry into relations. He had, also, left the frontier between subjective and objective ill-defined. The Königsberg philosopher takes over the loosened *manifold* impressions, and seeks to *relate* them. I pass over the obsolete Kantian unification in Space and Time,<sup>3</sup> the minor unifying syntheses "of apprehension in intuition,"

<sup>1</sup> *Hume*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> It is useless to look for consistency in Hume's writings. The statement just cited is materialistic. But elsewhere Hume poses as a subjective idealist, and regards the belief in a "double existence of perceptions and objects" as the "monstrous offspring" of warring imagination and reflection (*Treatise*, part iv. § 2). Elsewhere, again, he will not decide whether sensations "arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the Author of our Being." Incoherent thinking of this sort needs no comment.

<sup>3</sup> Not to advert to other objections, the theory leaves the detail order of "impressions" a sheer mystery. Why is the impression "blue" *here* and that of "green" *there*? Why do I *now* hear thunder? Why did I hear rain falling *a moment ago*? Kant may

etc., and reach the Categories. These are "judging" concepts—*a priori* conditions of experience whose function is to import universality and necessity into the impression-flux which had troubled, or rather amused, Hume. There is supposed a further unifying or "*thinking*" of impressions or sensations. And the Objective is simply that which we *have* to think, or which is thought for us, independently of our caprice, by the Transcendental Judgment. A judgment of subjective worth, valid only for this or that person, is a judgment of intuition or perception. But a judgment of Experience, which is given universally and necessarily to all percipients, shows the work of Pure Reason. There is a speculative "deduction" or vindication of these Categories. They are conditions of experience, forms of unity imposed on appearances as presented in space and time. "The category alone can never provide me with a concept of an object; for only by intuition is the object given which is afterwards thought in accordance with the categories." But were not the Categories *a priori* and their application valid, there could be no experience. No categories, no world of perception such as is arbitrarily thrust on us all. And here it is interesting to note how the quaint Platonic contempt for feeling persists. It would never do to place Categories and sensation on too democratic a footing! The Category is quite too exalted to descend into the realm of the felt—can never itself be perceptible to refer me to his occult sensigenous Things-in-themselves; if so, incoherence leaps to the eye. Things-in-themselves have to be credited with a *causal activity* which helps to determine both my sensations and the order of their appearance to me. And Causality, according to the *Critique*, is a notion which cannot be used thus transcendently, only applying within the confines of what experience presents!



sense in time and space.<sup>1</sup> Still it has to "get at" the sensations somehow. What is to serve as the go-between? What but the pure form of Time which at once is *a priori* and embraces all appearances as felt? The Category, accordingly, is schematised or embodied in a tenuous time-determination by the "productive imagination"—that pre-empirical imagination which proved subsequently so useful to Fichte. It is only in this more substantial guise that the category can apply to, and objectivate, universally and necessarily, the felt.

The story of the Categories merely opens with Kant. And if we consider the sequel we shall observe two opposing tendencies. (1) On the one hand, the list of Categories is reduced, some writers declining to adopt more than one. There is noticeable a very general rejection of the Categories of "Modality" and "Quality," and a strong disposition to dwell on the "Relation" group, Causality being sometimes favoured along with complete rejection of the rest. The original twelve<sup>2</sup> Categories were extracted from proposition-forms which were taken uncritically from the old logic.<sup>3</sup> Had Categories been vindicated or "de-

<sup>1</sup> Hegel considers the supersensible nature of the Category in the light of an "excellence." He urges, however, as against Kant (*Logic of Hegel*, p. 76), that Categories, "taken by themselves," are not "empty," but have a content "in the special stamp and significance that they possess." *Credat Judæus!* (Cf. § 5.)

<sup>2</sup> Kant, however, threw out a hint by which other categorists were not slow to profit: "If we associate the categories among themselves, or with the modes of pure sensibility, they yield us a large number of derivative concepts *a priori*, which it would be useful . . . to bring to a certain completeness" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Max Müller's translation).

<sup>3</sup> Kant "did not put himself to much trouble in discovering the categories" (Hegel).



duced" strictly on the lines of "No Categories, no objective experience," it would have been hard to make out even a respectable case for the twelve. (2) On the other hand, we find the Categories rescued from Kant's "shallow" subjective idealism,—the epithet is Hegel's,—regarded as the rational "souls of reality," made more numerous, dialectically interconnected and woven into a system of "thought"-determinations which is held to reveal the Absolute. This way, however, lies Logical Realism.

#### CATEGORIES ARE SUPERFLUOUS ASSUMPTIONS

Our immediate concern here is with the issue, Do supersensible Categories help us to account for the unfolding of the *world of sense*? Is the argument, "No Categories, no such experience," of any weight? And our mode of dealing with the question will be this. We shall set aside the Categories as superfluous assumptions, explaining the rise of perceived objects without their aid. The riddle of perceptual experience can be solved without recourse to such supersensible "relating" factors at all.

#### NOTE THAT THE CATEGORIES FAIL TO MEET THE SITUATION IN VIEW OF WHICH THEY WERE INVENTED

Incidentally, however, we must note that the Categories (whether the list be piously accepted or, as is usual, curtailed) fail in one very important regard. Kant's aim is to detect necessity in experience; this latter having suffered, theoretically speaking, from the "loosening" of impressions by Hume. He takes over these loosened *manifold* impressions as "matter" which has to be unified in a universal and necessary

way. Now this "manifold," as we have already seen, is absolute myth. But, waiving this point, let us recall what the transcendental judgment is held to effect. Well, we have seen that, according to Kant, there obtain "judgments of intuition," or perceptions which are not subsumed under the Categories, and are, therefore, not properly objective at all. The categories are not always applied. And *when they are applied*, their significance amounts merely to this: they import universality and necessity into the ready-made sensible appearances or phenomena which intuition supplies.<sup>1</sup> Given this *superimposed* necessity, objective experience is possible; failing it, no such experience can arise. But what of the appearances which *come to* the transcendental judgment? The problem of their happening in space and time must give us pause. The superimposed necessity may be compatible with contingency in the region of Kant's Things-in-themselves. We are obliged, you say, to "*think*" universally and necessarily; but that which is "*thought*" slips through the logical net. The *practical* convenience of conscious percipients has been consulted. Hume's billiard-balls<sup>2</sup> are now "necessarily connected" — *for us*. But why the appearance (one ball moving) should be followed by another appearance (the moving

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Logic of Hegel*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the well-known passage in the *Inquiry*, § 7, which discusses the impact of billiard-balls: "The first time a man saw the communication by impulse, he could not pronounce that the one event was *connected*, but only that it was *conjoined*, with the other. After he has observed several instances of this nature, he then pronounces them to be *connected*. What alteration has happened to give rise to this new idea of connection? Nothing but that he feels those events to be connected in his imagination."

of a second ball when hit) — this all-important *theoretical* issue has been left entirely obscure. We must assert, then, that Kant has not met the most serious difficulty indicated by Hume; the Categories, if we care to retain them, having at best only a practical worth.<sup>1</sup>

SCHOPENHAUER DISCARDS ALL THE CATEGORIES  
SAVE CAUSALITY

The Categories, indeed, as Schopenhauer remarks, "bring nothing to perception." This critic, while preserving the false subjective idealism of Kant's *Æsthetic*, is hostile, withal, to the *Analytic*. He throws overboard eleven of the Categories, but adopts Causality. He adopts it, however, in his own way. He has convicted Kant of confusing perception and thought. He will not hear of a Category which has to be "schematised" and then "*thought*" into space and time appearances so as to yield objects. Appearances are *intuited* as causally related both to one another and to ourselves. The intuitive understanding transforms our "*wholly subjective sensations*" into speciously foreign facts which seem to act on, and work changes in, us. There arises, accordingly, the semblance of a world which is opposed to, and different from, its perceiver. Now Causality is the only Category for which a tolerable case can be made out. And this case, as presented by Schopenhauer, is assuredly the best which circumstances permit. But, of a verity, there is no call to fall back on Causality to account for the genesis, *even for us*, of Nature or the external objective world.

<sup>1</sup> Hume's difficulty has been already discussed by us on more adequate lines (Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).



BUT HIS RETENTION OF CAUSALITY IS DUE TO A MISTAKE—OBJECT IS NOT EXTRUDED FROM SUBJECT

The Intuitive Understanding is not required. We have seen (1) that there are no original manifold sensations or impressions. Sensations are abstractions. (2) That Object is not extruded from Subject, but arises, in relativity with it, out of a Neutrum. The "wholly subjective sensations" are myth. In discussing the rise of Subject and Object we found that it is the object which is dominant at the start. There is at first mere presentedness. Then "an aspect stands out of this presentedness. This, in virtue of its strength, has special 'awareness,' and, emerging against the background of the Centre, is 'felt.' Consciousness belongs to content. In contrast with this intruder, the residual territory of the Centre is what 'feels': here lies the subdued, indiscriminated content which backs, invests, and frames the felt. The dominant aspect is the prototype of the Object; the subdued content, that of the Subject. The Subject thus heralded is not a knowing 'Medium'! It is the twilight realm of the Centre over against which special aspects become clear."<sup>1</sup> Object, in the widest sense of the term, means any appearance which is noticed, or stands out over against the "subdued realm." An emotion or volition or dream of fancy can be objective in this way. Object, in a narrower sense of the term, means just the *external* or *outward* object which we are considering now. The appearances which fall into this class have been already discussed. They not only stand out over against the "subdued realm," but they present special features which the objects known as inward appearances do not display

<sup>1</sup> Part II. Chap. II. § 6.



(Part II. Chap. III. § 6). However, the relevant consideration here is that they do not belong to the Subject. Not belonging to the Subject, they do not require to be extruded from it, as Schopenhauer supposed.

We note, then, that the "*Being*" of the outward object is not the work of an intuitive understanding. Schopenhauer's metamorphosed Category is a superfluous assumption.

"BEING" IS A LOGICAL—ORIGIN OF MY PRIMITIVE  
SPACE AND TIME

The "*Being*" of my sense-world, in fine, is allogical. If crude objectivity can be *felt*, there is no call for a supersensible and unverifiable Category wherewith to "*think*" it. The "thought-determination" Being is treated by Hegel as if it were of supreme interest, and feeling so much residual dross. The truth is that the supersensible "thought" is neither discoverable nor wanted, and that despised feeling remains over as the all-important, impregnable fact. You cannot squeeze presentations out of supersensible categories,<sup>1</sup> but it is at least arguable that you can abstract a so-called "category" from the manner in which presentations are felt! And having said this much, and being content to ignore the Category as superfluous, I pass on. Space and Time require a further remark. As we saw, they are not merely "subjective forms." The Enveloping System, as well as my conscious centre, is spatial and in ceaseless flux. The cortex, also, is in Time and Space; hence its processes, when they

<sup>1</sup> There are said to be 30,000 shades of colour in the Roman mosaics. What does the categorist say about these?

become conscious, reveal both; primitively presented Space and Time differing, of course, much from those later forms which in part involuntarily arise, in part are voluntarily made.<sup>1</sup> We have no call to dwell on the psychological history of time and space: some further metaphysical consideration of them awaits us in its proper place anon. They are thoroughly of the nature of Feeling: present nothing from which feeling-differences could be abstracted, with the result of leaving mysterious supersensible residua behind.

#### GROUND OF THE SO-CALLED "SYNTHETIC" UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We have agreed, then, to regard Being, in the first intention, as felt. Having done so, we shall incur no further trouble with "Categories," "thought-determinations," "relations," and so forth. There is a felt content in view whenever one of these is intelligibly,

<sup>1</sup> I have never yet read any plausible defence of the view that primitive space is not a genuinely presented fact; e.g., the sensating of different colours, which, as different, must bound one another, shows the crude coexistence (not mere time-simultaneity) which is in question. The argument is d'Alembert's and has never been—can never be—met. The contentions of physiological psychologists are excellently summed up by Professor Pringle Pattison in his work on *The Scottish Philosophy*, pp. 95, 96. The psychologists have pointed out various elements "by the help of which, or on the occasion of which," we perceive space. "But the distinctive element in the synthesis—or, in other words, space, the synthesis itself—remains after the analysis just where it was. It cannot be explained into anything else; it can only be named." Exactly. Space, as subjected to analysis, presupposes, along with other factors, the original more or less chaotic and unmeasured *cortical spaces*. These original spaces, however, are not "syntheses." They are not put together by "Thought," but *disclose* content already together in that continuous basis of Nature wherein the cortex and organism obtain.

and not verbally, discussed.<sup>1</sup> We are not, withal, metaphysical Atomists. We believe in a continuum wherein content appears. We deny only that this continuum is constituted by "Thought," the "excellence" (Hegel) of which raises it above the sensibly felt! Let us note, however, that the unity of consciousness presupposes a special kind of continuity in its ground. My conscious centre is an oasis in the sub-conscious. A continuity of *intensely live* (Chap. V. §§ 2 and 3) process in the cortex is required. Failing this continuity, *several* conscious centres, so many insulated or "closed" circles, would arise in the same brain. Given this continuity, content, whether livened by changes within or without the body, appears in *one* consciousness. Such content, which rises on to the conscious level, becomes what we call Feeling.

#### THE PASSAGE OF OBJECTIVITY INTO OBJECTS

Indeterminate, or relatively indeterminate, Being, a confused total impression looming over against the obscure Subject, is the first form in which external objectivity appears. This objectivity is not an abstraction (being, in fact, neither general nor particular); just presentation indefinite or indiscriminated within itself. This stupid Presence has to be broken up to yield the single objects, events, qualities, etc., which my adult perceptive consciousness contains. "Atten-

<sup>1</sup> They are not necessarily feelings of *transition*. Spencer defines a "relation" as the "momentary feeling accompanying the transition from one conspicuous feeling to an adjacent conspicuous feeling." (His conspicuous and inconspicuous feelings are the originals of James's "substantive" and "transitive" states.) What have been discussed as categories are often very conspicuous feelings indeed.



tion" has been invoked as helpful in explaining this process; but if by "Attention" is meant—and this seems often the case—a "self-direction of the Mind," we shall do well to set this mysterious agency aside. At the outset, at any rate, there is no dynamic from above. We may urge that the appearances rising from the sub-conscious just *stand out* or select themselves. "Attention" *results* from struggle—from a veritable war of furthering and thwarting psychical might—in the cortical processes, presentative and representative, involved.<sup>1</sup> Struggle, as we are beginning to realise, is universal. The advance now is from confused objectivity to what Hegel calls "Being determinate," or definite, and thence, again, as the appearances stand out more and more against their background and against one another, to "thing" and "things," "wholes" and "parts," "substances" and "qualities," "successions," "causal sequences,"<sup>2</sup> groups of "things" which interact independently of my will—in short, to the full broken-up diversity of the objective regard. Objectivity thus precedes objects. The perceived "thing," of course, changes, retaining the "contradictory" unity-in-variety of the presentation-continuum in which it stands out. But some such "Things"—*e.g.* the inkpot now before me—are relatively stable as compared with others. A foundation is thus secured for the conceptual "Thing," which

<sup>1</sup> "The image seems to welcome its own mate from out the compound, and to heighten the feeling thereof: whereas it dampens and opposes the feelings of the other constituents: and thus the compound becomes broken for our consciousness into parts" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, i. 503 (Macmillan, 1901)).

<sup>2</sup> For Causality, *cf.* Part II. Chap. IV. § 12. It is much harder to account for the "conjunctions" than to suggest how these, when once given, are "connected." The first difficulty is shirked by the Categorists.



alone is really stable, and which, not being presented, has to be invented (*naît du besoin*) in my interests anon. The groups of "Things" which interact, irrespective of my willing, serve to make that notable characteristic of external objects, their *independence*, and consequently their pronounced foreign look, practically secure. Nevertheless, outward objectivity, however well developed, is foreign only in seeming and for practical purposes, but not in fact. The "independent" objects are shadow-objects (Part II. Chap. IV. § 16), and have their place in my Centre. Hence Idealism is always in waiting to lay claim to my objective world. There will be *felt* in the maturing consciousness that to which the naïve consciousness is blind. The Continuum, to which both the subject and the object consciousness belong, becomes itself felt at last as a Whole. The initial conviction is that all the reality *which I know directly* is Experience. A novel starting-point for a new voyage of discovery has been reached.

#### ON THE ATTAINMENT OF THE FULL OBJECTIVE

##### REGARD

But the commanding character of my objective world seems, perhaps, even now not sufficiently explained. I must allude briefly to two processes which throw the inherently *foreign look* of the Object into pronounced relief.

We have seen that both presentation and *re*-presentation take part in the original breaking-up of the Continuum. And later the momentary passing presentation suffers most important amplification and modification from *re*-presentative states. Thus Space, as it now comes, is unlike the chaos in which it began,

And the "Forces" with which "*things*" seem equipped are bodied in muscular feelings of the *representative* sort. Presentations are flooded with these so-called "associated" states. The psychological analysis of my Centre would consist largely in the exposition of this important fact. And one consequence is an ideal construction, that of THE WORLD<sup>1</sup>—an arrangement of an abiding character in which momentary impressions, directly relative to transcendent appulse, are set. I do not sensate much of yon mountain; but a veritable Continent, reaching backward and forward in time, rises representatively along with the impressional show. As the sense-appulse invades the cortex, the initial disturbance arouses a wealth of secondary disturbances. There results a presentative-representative complex—a vast system of ideal objects, qualities, and events which *frames* the relatively few objects which, at the moment, are being vividly felt. Now this system seems verifiable in actual fact. Its ideal objects, etc., are, in very large measure, realisable presentatively, if I so desire. And its practical worth, for my thinking, is great indeed. "There is scarce a moment of my life wherein . . . . I have not occasion to suppose the continued existence of objects, in order to connect their past and present appearances, and give them such a union with each other as I have found by experience to be suitable to their particular nature and circumstances. *Here, then, I am naturally glad to regard the world as something real and durable, and as preserving its existence even when it is no longer present to my perception.*"<sup>2</sup>

I pass to consider a second process which serves to accent the inherently foreign look of the Object. At

<sup>1</sup> Not an "Idea of the Reason"!

<sup>2</sup> Hume.

an early stage of experience I come, in a way already discussed (Part II. Chap. III. § 8), to believe in the reality of other percipient centres (Ejects) like my own. Anon I learn indirectly that each such percipient confronts a foreign-seeming world. And I find that any one of these worlds can, *for practical purposes*, be treated as the *same* as the world which appears to me.<sup>1</sup> This radically practical attitude gets reflected in my immature thinking. I drift into the conviction that it is one and the same world which wears a foreign look for us all. But that which seems foreign to me, and which manifests its foreign character to others as well, is surely a *common* independent world—not an arrangement which depends for its existence on the incident of being known by me.

Enough has now been said about the arising of Objective experience within the finite human Centre. The Object is so effectively educed that the plain man and the popular philosopher take for granted the obviousness of an independent external world. And not infrequently this world, stripped of its “secondary” qualities, and conceived in a mechanical way, is held to produce the self-same conscious experience in which it appears! This way lies Materialism, which can belong only to the immaturity of thought. More complete knowledge, embodied in a proposition, gives me the truth: the world, as directly known to *mé*, lies within experience—within the circle where I, and I alone, perhaps, of finite persons, abide. There obtains, indeed, a Macrocosm. But it

<sup>1</sup> We saw long ago that this practical belief in a common perceived world is not, strictly speaking, true. So many Centres, so many perceived worlds! (Part II. Chap. III. § 4).



is only through appearances in the Microcosm that any content-activity in this Macrocosm can make itself felt. A Real-Idealism, which recognises the individual and his territory in full, is the truth which *experience*, in its mature form, will attest.

#### "NEUROSIS" AND "PSYCHOSIS"

§ 9. Aristotle observes that there are writers who discuss the soul as if any kind of soul could go along with any kind of body. To-day there is no thinker of importance who neglects to consider the organic, and more especially the cerebral, "accompaniments" of conscious life. "Experiment and disease show that there are psycho-neural processes localised in fibres that can be approximately counted . . . and dependent on the integrity of specific cell-groups, which no one who knows the facts, now easily shown, could think due only to an imponderable principle mediating freely between parts without necessitating connection of tissue."<sup>1</sup> I have no space to dwell on the evidence which goes to show that conscious processes implicate bodily change. I accept it, and my present business is to suggest how the conscious processes (or, as we may call them here, the *psychoses*), and the bodily processes "correlated" with them in the brain, the *neuroses*, are allied. We have really answered the question (§ 2, THE CONDITIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS), but there is no harm in reconsidering this time-honoured riddle in a novel regard.

#### ABSURDITIES OF MATERIALISM

There is a form of Materialism which asserts neuroses, conceived mechanically of course, *are*

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Hall.



psychoses.<sup>1</sup> Thus thinking, for example, is identical with a "special mode of general natural motion." This theory has enjoyed, and still enjoys, popularity. But we have seen that Materialism is nonsense. *There are no "mechanical" neuroses in the continuous basis of Nature.* A mechanical cosmos is a figment of human thinking. And it could not even be thought, were it not that the use of words allows us to mean, for certain ends, that which concrete sentiency, when fully noticed, never displays.

Incidentally, we must observe that this Materialism makes two incompatible statements in a breath. The mechanical neuroses, it affirms, *are* the psychoses. The word "psychoses," however, covers perceptions, emotions, volitions, etc.—experiences which cannot be divested of the characters which they are felt to possess. Such experiences, in a word, are more than mechanical facts. Hence to say that neuroses are the *same as* psychoses is to say that these neuroses are more than mechanical facts. The identification does not degrade psychosis, but *exalts neurosis!* The mechanical neurosis is abolished. And with this I pass on.

Another form of materialism maintains that neuroses are not, but *produce*, psychoses. Why this useless "production"? And, what does "production" mean? Are we to suppose that "movement" evaporates off "moving" extensions, and is then, in some fearful and wonderful way, transformed? This way lies verbiage. Yet another form, which Bain calls "guarded materialism," denies this production, and regards neuroses and psychoses as different sides of the same process. It

<sup>1</sup> Büchner, Vogt, Moleschott, Letourneau, Broussais, Brühl, etc.

is implied, however, that the physical side of this process does all the work, while the psychoses are merely *carried* and make no whit of difference to the physical results. These hypotheses are artificial, and vulnerable, indeed, at every point. But, not to waste space on useless polemics, it will suffice to repeat the main objection which has been urged before. Materialism, in any form, must be false, for there are no barely mechanico-physical processes in the continuous basis of Nature.

Our position, in view of foregoing results, is not difficult to state. Neurosis, as discussed by the physiologist, belongs to the class of *shadow-objects* or mediated shows (Part II. Chap. IV. § 16). Neurosis, as it obtains outside the physiologist's circle of perceptions, actual or imaginary, belongs to an indefinitely rich macrocosm of fact—a macrocosm, however, whose content-activities are like in character to content we know. And this neurosis, in so far as it is aglow with intense life (Part II. Chap. V. § 2), rises on to the conscious level, revealing its proper nature in the act.

#### CONSCIOUS PROCESSES INFLUENCE THE BODY

It is remarked by Bradley that no one, "except to save a theory," would deny that in volition psychosis influences body.<sup>1</sup> Exactly. Volition plays a leading part in the service of the bodily life. Let us suppose that the body is responding to external stimuli. Let

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, p. 324. Bradley argues for a psychical and a physical time-series. But it is not clear how his Absolutist Idealism can accommodate a "physical" series. What content is this latter supposed to possess? And how does the psychical series "get at" the brain-series and the physical series outside the brain and the body?

us suppose, further, that there is some "hesitancy" in the cortex, and that conscious volition is involved. On the lines of our idealism, the situation is just this. Consciousness may be said to *light* certain processes which mediate between the afferent and the efferent currents of the reflex action. The volition is not an inert accompaniment. We have here a revelation, a laying-bare of one of the most potent factors which determine the adjustive response.

Observe that I am merely indicating that volition is *a* factor in the production of the adjustive act. There are innumerable other factors beyond what appears in the willing and thinking Centre of consciousness: there are the sub-conscious implicated bodily processes, cerebral, muscular, etc., to be reckoned with. Still it is a factor, and a potent one, failing which the adjustment would not be what it is. The question as to whether this factor is itself strictly determined or is to be adjudged "free" (the problem of Freedom *v.* Determinism) opens up a further issue, of which we shall shortly take account.

Our idealism, then, handles the neurosis-psychosis enigma with ease. The facts suggesting dependence of conscious process on body, and, again, the facts suggesting modification of the body by conscious process, are alike welcome. It is idle to refuse volition an influence on the body. It seems more reasonable to say that there is no psychosis of any kind which does not react on the entire organism. On the other hand, dualistic theories which regard "soul" as a "*player*" and the brain as a *blind, passive "instrument"* must be dismissed unhesitatingly as absurd. I am hit on the head while willing and thinking, and



consciousness goes out. A piece of bone is pressing on the brain. When this bone is removed, consciousness returns, and with it the process of willing-thinking *where it had been dropped*. Pathology furnishes cases of this kind, and their significance leaps to the eye. The fact is that when certain neuroses happen, certain psychoses are involved as well. The cortex passes anew into conscious life.

We have disposed already of hypotheses which posit an *unextended* monad or soul.<sup>1</sup> So far, so good. But we have to take note of a complication, and our proximate results are not so satisfactory as at first sight they may appear. This important complication will be dealt with in the proper place (Part. III.): there are involved certain speculative considerations which it would be hardly profitable to advance here. For the present, we may state provisionally the situation as follows. The Centre of consciousness (whose aspects are called psychoses) is not the show of an unextended soul which plays on a blind, insentient cortex. We seem driven to maintain that it is rather the cortex which, in respect of processes aglow with intense life, becomes the Centre!

#### A THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF CONSCIOUSNESS MUST COVER ALL CASES OF SENTIENT LIFE

§ 10. I will close this chapter with a consideration on which too great stress cannot be laid. When writers are explaining the rise of conscious life, they are apt

<sup>1</sup> The best case for an unextended monad or soul is probably that made out by Herbart and Lotze. But the inherent artificiality of the theory involves them in difficulties. (*Riddle*, p. 327.)



to frame hypotheses which have only the *human centre* in view. But, of course, the cat, rat, ant, and black-beetle, also, have claims on our notice. And we must admit that there are still lower levels on which a more or less nascent awareness obtains. *A generally applicable theory of the rise of consciousness must be advanced.*

Let us hear less talk about the wonderful endowments of man. "Bare acquaintance"<sup>1</sup> with sensible impression is essentially as remarkable as anything in a developed conscious experience can be. Conscious experience, not the mere *extent* of its development, is the riddle. Were this truth borne in mind, it is probable that most of the popular soul-theories would disappear. No one discusses dualism in the cases of the ant and black-beetle, and yet, if dualism were worth anything, it would apply, I presume, to the situation presented by creatures like these.

<sup>1</sup> "Bare acquaintance" is Hegel's expression, meaning the mere fact "as it appears to the senses." (*Logic of Hegel*, Wallace's translation, p. 35.)

## CHAPTER VI

### THE UNFOLDING IN MY CENTRE (*continued*)

THE unfolding in my Centre begins, as we saw, with vague, confused feeling. And from this vague feeling-whole emerge the correlatives Object and Subject with their ever-shifting frontiers and all that in them is. There is no *tabula rasa*, or even a Transcendental Ego, which lies ready to receive what primarily appears.<sup>1</sup> There is just the continuous basis of Nature, the ever-changing sub-conscious turmoil within the cortex, which passes, with varyingly accented phases, into my two-sided conscious life.

### NO CATEGORIES ARE REQUIRED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF "MIND"

§ 1. There are no factors in this unfolding which call for a "Transcendental Logic."<sup>2</sup> We need not, as was seen, assume supersensible Thought-determinations [categories] in explaining how the object-experience and the contrasted mental or subject-experience come to *arise*. And the *full development* of the opposites may be understood without our having

<sup>1</sup> For the complication already adverted to, cf. Part III. Chap. V.

<sup>2</sup> Logic, as understood in this essay, may be defined as the science of propositions in so far as these subserve the end of inferring truth.

recourse to the hypothesis of mythological monsters of this kind. Even the most exalted intellectual process contains nothing which is not reducible to feeling.

“MIND” AND “WORLD” ARE FELT IN  
MUTUAL DEPENDENCE

§ 2. There is nowhere an abrupt break in the process whereby what is called the “mature mind” comes to confront “the World.” And the character of this confrontation, again, must be noted with care. The confrontation is within my Centre. Thus “intellect” and “its object” are not independent existents which face one another across a void. They are mutually supporting aspects, and the growth or decay of one is also the growth or decay of the other. The Truth about the World implicates what the World is felt to be. And there is actually present to the thinker, with his special attentions (or “analyses”) and syntheses, a different and more elaborate World than that of the ordinary man. And, apart from analyses and syntheses of aspects *within* the given, there is the very important fact of supplementation to be borne in mind. Every merely *presented* momentary given is supplemented representatively, as we saw. But the supplementation in the case of the thinker may be extensive indeed. He has direct knowledge only of the contents of his Centre. But in thought, as we say, he goes out into the universe. His original experience includes not even a single alien centre like his own. Nevertheless, this experience, in its mature form, has seemed to many to attain a grasp of the Absolute! Man, on one side, finite, has claimed, withal, to compass [conceptually] “*infinite knowledge*.”

The development of intellect has carried with it a supplementation and total transformation of sensible reality as it was, at earlier stages, more or less crudely cognised. This claim to know the Absolute, *i.e.* the "complete, perfect, and finished" Whole of reality, cannot stand. A Timeless Absolute is, perhaps, myth. The thinking of the finite centre is actually within its private circle and not without. But the relevant fact to note is that the intellectual processes, which debouch in Absolutism, imply a transformation of reality as it was originally thrust on sense.

THE CONTENTS OF THE CENTRE, WHETHER THEY  
BELONG TO INWARD OR OUTWARD EXPERIENCE,  
ARE ALL MODES OF FEELING.

§ 3. The *contents* of the Centre, whether we refer to the originally confused continuum, to perceptions, emotions and æsthetic attitudes, volitions, imaginative and reasoning processes, or what not, may be described as all alike modes of Feeling. It might still be urged that the *Centre itself* is a "Thought"-unity, and that the "Universal" shows at least plainly here.<sup>1</sup> But the contention is not required. The so-called "synthetic" unity of consciousness is alogical. Consciousness *lights* a primitive continuum, we have long since agreed. The continuum, however, is *felt* whole; and it is felt whole because its content, which becomes conscious, was *already* whole: a tract of a wider sub-conscious whole which does not appear.<sup>2</sup> And with respect to developments within the continuum, we do not want to suppose super-sensible

<sup>1</sup> "'I' is the absolute Universal . . . *Thought*, viewed as a subject, is expressed by the word 'I'" (Hegel).

<sup>2</sup> This underlying sub-conscious whole is discussed in Part III., "The Ground of Appearance," and elsewhere.



"Thought"-determinations, or categories, if we only accord feeling its due. Idealism itself is a deliverance of feeling. And all the so-called "differentiations" and "integrations" of thinking ground in feeling. The much-paraded "relations" between feelings are themselves feelings. There is no urgency which invites appeal to a heaven of supersensible "unifying" notions.

#### ASSOCIATION AND MENTAL GROWTH

§ 4. The development of mind continues to illustrate that strife which presides over the rise of my objective world. "Dissociation," or the outstanding of differences and difference-complexes, shows this trait plainly enough. "Association" exhibits it as well. It has been sought to reduce Association, physiologically regarded, to neural habit. "There is no other *elementary* causal law of association than the law of neural habit" (James). And "the difference between the three kinds of association [Total, partial, and focalised] reduces itself to a simple difference in the amount of that portion of the nerve-tract supporting the going thought which is operative in calling up the thought which comes."<sup>1</sup> Neural habit, however, interpreted

<sup>1</sup> "Thought," as used here, has, of course, no reference, as in the last section, to "categories." Further, it means a *re*-presentation, not a "stored-up" idea. On *Association*, cf. James's very clear and straightforward treatment of the question (*Principles of Psychology*, ii. 550-604, Macmillan, 1901). Association, let us add, cannot possibly be accepted in the form in which it was originally taught. (1) Its "laws" are mere generalities which refer to (but produce no) facts, (2) psychical atomism is myth, and (3) nothing is "recalled" genuinely from the past. The presentative-representative consciousness lights content which is *really fresh*. The dynamic of representation is what is interesting us here.

on our lines, carries us to the cortical MINOR CENTRES. The expression of the elementary causal law of association in physiological terms has to be revised when we come to metaphysics. For the "neural activities" of the physiological psychologist are "shadow-objects." They point only to richer facts in the basis of Nature, facts *continuous with, and like in character to, the representations whose trains they are said to "control."* We have discussed this matter fully before. It remains to emphasise anew the STRUGGLE among the minor centres, which is implied. "Some one brain-process is always *pre-potent* above its concomitants in arousing action elsewhere." Here, again, we meet with the Alogical. The minor centres may work to our weal or to our undoing. While they are furthering and hindering one another, my representative life, which lights only a fragment of the cortex, may be wrecked. Even in the case of a gifted "mind" (we are prone to bethink ourselves of this latter only at its best), rubbish is whirled on to the conscious level apace. And a dynamic which, at one extreme, supports a Hegel or Mill, serves, at the other extreme, to condition a maniac or fool.

#### THE EXPLANATION, WITHAL, IS NOT YET COMPLETE

But we cannot admit that "neural habit," *even as interpreted on our lines*, has the whole field to itself. The fulness of the *re-presentative*, as opposed to the presentative life, is by no means disposed of so easily as some may think. No one will credit Hume with a desire to underrate "association." But despite his zeal for association and his occasional lapses into sheer materialism, he confesses himself unable to explain the full representative life. He admits a

"kind of *magical faculty* in the soul, which, though it be always most perfect in the greatest geniuses, and is properly what we call a genius, is, however, inexplicable by the utmost efforts of human understanding."<sup>1</sup> Suppose that we consider the higher imaginative constructions in this regard. These are amazingly novel in "*form*," while all that can be said about their "*matter*" is that it is *like* "*matter*" which has been presented before. Now the point is that these constructions *may* appear in their full beauty at once. "If one has the spirit of a composer," said Mozart, "one writes because one cannot help it," just indeed as the generalising genius arrives at his truths by way of Tyndall's "spiritual inspiration." Mozart, in fact, as we know from the account of his life written by Holmes, found that his work was to *record* trains of auditory imagery as they came. Genius here is inspirational knowledge allied with industry. How is it produced? The dynamic of the cerebral minor centres, *while implicated*, seems hardly adequate to furnish the complete causal solution sought. There is suggested an influence proceeding from a further source.<sup>2</sup> Many other facts in the representative life support an hypothesis of this kind. We recall here the "amphibian life" described by Plotinus: "Only a part of us is imprisoned by the body, as if one stood with his feet in water, the rest of his body being out of it"—the superior part not being present to the waking consciousness (*Enneads*, vi.). I have merely to indicate this consideration here; I

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise*, i. § 7.

<sup>2</sup> I am not, of course, suggesting that this source contains anything that could not be entirely present to consciousness in Feeling. We have done with the discussion of "categories" and the like.

do not propose to dwell on it until we reach Part III. It is best to be quit of the less speculative portions of our inquiry first. It is well, however, that such phenomena as I have cited should give us pause. They may arise unsought and continue unforced; conscious will, as in the case of "passive sensation," seeming not to guide, but *to encounter*, the streaming from first to last. A transcendent *personal* consciousness is possible, of course. Such a consciousness, like a cerebral "secondary self," may coexist with the waking consciousness, which latter is in touch with it indirectly through what it *effects*. Having said this much, we can return to more familiar ground.

#### THERE IS A MAJOR CENTRE WHICH IS MORE THAN THE MINOR CEREBRAL CENTRES

§ 5. The "neural habit" theory is incomplete in a further regard. It fails because it looks at the facts too much *from the outside*. It does not take account of all that goes on *within* the sphere even of the humdrum workaday conscious life. It drives us, if we interpret it metaphysically, to pay undue attention to the minor centres and *too little attention to the Major Centre*, IN which their workings appear, but which is a reality *more than*, and, consequently, more important than, they. I will enter into this matter, which includes the discussion of the problem of Freedom, at some length.

#### THIS VERY IMPORTANT WHOLE MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED

My Centre is more than the minor centres to which the "shadow-objects" of the physiological



psychologist point. But this truth is easily overlooked if we attack the problem from the outside. Thus the Centre develops at first in the service of the body. The simplest inferences or reasonings are mere supplementation of presentation with *representations*,<sup>1</sup> supplementation which furthers the welfare of the total bodily life. Such reasonings and the pains and pleasures and volitions which go along with them guide the motor adjustments which particular circumstances demand. But the Centre, while it subserves the preservation of the body, develops *also*, if the situation is viewed from *its* standpoint, *for itself*. And this latter aspect comes to be more and more prominent as its expansion proceeds. Let us make

<sup>1</sup> A seal sees a fish and acts as if the fish were *more* than what is seen. It is not only visually conscious, but is aware of aroused representative feelings such as accompany the gorging of its food. This secondary arousal, were it to occur in a human brain, could be stated as one sort of inference—as the *carrying into* primary sensorial content of a content like what has been felt before. When I see a dog showing its teeth, I infer that it will probably bite. Here also sensorial content is filled out with representation. I am first aware of a familiar object. The inference that it will bite consists in representation (which is forced on to the conscious level by cortical process) being *noticed*. The word “probably” indicates that *contending* representations, *i.e.* secondary presentations, are aroused, and that one block of these stands out more clearly than the rest. The dog (itself an ideally amplified object) *occupies* the focus of consciousness, and is hence at the moment the most *real* thing that I know. The representations which clothe it will be equally attended with belief. There is no direct experience for me outside my circle, and that which stands out therein is real and must be believed! But, again, there are *many sorts of reality*. And the dog’s body is real on the physical level: *i.e.* is classed with those modes of reality which we call houses, fields, mountains, stocks, and stones. This *physically real* object confers its standing on the *representations* which fuse with it. Its biting, though *imaged*, is “referred” to the sphere of *physical fact*.

no mistake in this matter. When the human cortex passes on to the conscious level, a *novel* fact is born in the universe. There has arisen a MAJOR CONSCIOUS WHOLE—an integral, albeit limited and changeful, real, the point of departure for a development which will take place on novel lines. The finite fragmentary Centre is at once rooted in, and cut off from, its sub-conscious continuous ground. So far as its direct awareness goes, it is a focus of experience which shines in its own light and for its limited ends. True, it is a feeling-complex, and not a simple monad. It embraces all the workings of the minor centres which momentarily appear in it, and stripped, indeed, of these would be an abstraction without content and worth. But it is A WHOLE with subordinated aspects, *not a "sum."* And it is no merely passive Whole thrust up from below; it is rather a fresh struggling unity with an "inquiétude poussante" of its own. It will react *as a living Whole* on the dynamic of the variously interrelated contents which it displays. Were a Demiurge forecasting the future, it would not suffice for him to allow for the body. A NEW CONDITION HAS BEEN EVOLVED IN THE TIME-FLUX. His predictions would not be secure, unless he took into consideration the novel fragmentary Centre which has come to light!!

THE CENTRE AS "THINKER" IS ABOVE THE ZONE  
OF "NEURAL HABIT"

The theoretic interest reveals the Centre as this *living whole* which pursues an end, impossibly present to any of the contents, taken severally, which it may display.

## THINKING NOT MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF "DOING"

It has been urged that "my thinking is first and last, and always for the sake of my doing." But this is to overlook an important side of the truth. I do not think in order to write this book, but I write this book because I have first thought. Our particular metaphysical kind of thinking need not minister to physical "doing" at all. Nor, again, does it take place solely that we may be active or doing *something*. It is the satisfying of an impulse, alogical at root, to notice and bring to clear consciousness the reality which experience contains. *It is a form in which the Might behind and within appearances rises, as it were, into more intense life. An improved awareness of reality is pursued as an end in itself.* Otherwise, a Plato, an Aristotle, a Hegel, could not exist. The realisation of this end implies time-process and change, and in this interval something, of course, is being "done." The something is the attaining of the more adequate awareness! The emphasis is entirely on the theoretic side of the process. Observe that this knowing interest forces itself to the front in the teeth of narrower interests which it tends to thwart. Observe, too, that the thinker frequently carries on his work despite efforts which involve considerable pain. We seem possessed by an impulse of a special sort—an impulse which, careless of attendant pleasures and pains, "will out." The metaphysical interest recalls the progress of the mountaineer. There are, perhaps, more pains than pleasures incurred during the ascent of a high peak. But whatever may befall me in the way of discomforts and fatigue, I am realising throughout the consciousness of a more real and intense life. I do not want to *do anything with* this



consciousness. I regard it as a possession which is of worth for its own sake.

THOUGH THINKING CAN NEVER BE FULLY  
SATISFACTORY

It is certain, moreover, that when I reach the summit of the peak, I shall not be contented eternally with the result. The satisfaction will be temporary, and some novel unrest will speedily make itself felt. And similarly in the case of thinking, where nothing like finality can be attained. *Conceptual thinking can never be fully satisfactory.* Truth, as expressed in a propositional system, is a makeshift for that ideal awareness which could only be reached in immediate intuitive feeling. But it is a makeshift which here and now is, at first and with good results, treated as an end in itself. Happily for our development, we do not usually detect the flaws of conceptual thinking until the need for being absolutely in earnest with it is past.

TRUTH ITSELF A MAKESHIFT

Truth is an imperfect, because a verbally-embodied abstract form of feeling. This form has to be pursued, seeing that, under present human limitations, we cannot *comprehend* or "take together" appearances, direct and supplemented, in another way. It is a stage in that full awareness of the real for which we thirst. But even for non-mystics, there are foregleams of a comprehensive awareness superior to thinking. In intuiting this Swiss landscape, I am knowing a portion of the universe in a whole concrete way, as a presentative-representative complex beside



which the shades of the discursive reason show poor indeed. A propositional *system* of truth comprehends, of course, very much more. But besides being abstract, *this system in its entirety is never with me*; I am never aware of it, whole and parts, all at once. I am, like the miser, always counting over my money to be sure that I have got it. A healthy, if obscure, distrust of the "system" marks the popular contempt for learning, and enters into the reflections of many cultured, but not hide-bound, folk.<sup>1</sup> It is not ill that even the young philosopher should sometimes suspect the "system." It is important, nevertheless, that he should pass under the customary yoke. The person who wants to think the universe adequately without reference to the history of philosophy and the labours of past and contemporary workers, imagines a vain thing. At the same time, we are to recall that wisdom is not hidden away in books, but, for him who feels aright, is *in part* directly present in the appearances of this sensible world.

#### BUT AN INDISPENSABLE ONE

The illuminist recognises the emptiness of conceptual thought, and is for immediate, as opposed to reasoned, knowledge. "The Arabians say that Abul-Khain, the mystic, and Abul Ali Seena, the philosopher, conferred together; and, in parting, the philosopher

<sup>1</sup> A philosophical "system" may become a fetish. And even literature, as a whole, is easily overrated, especially by those whose work is to produce or criticise it. "I have never been able to take literature very seriously," wrote John Addington Symonds. "Life seems so much graver, more important, more permanently interesting than books. Literature is what Aristotle called it, *διαγωγή*, an honest, healthful pastime" (*Our Life in the Swiss Highlands*). The mere bookworm, as we know, is usually a fool.

said, 'All that he sees I know,' and the mystic said, 'All that he knows I see.'<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted, I think, that historical mysticism, in the persons of its abler representatives, does not appear to have "seen" to much purpose. The nobler mystics,<sup>2</sup> if we except Plotinus and perhaps Böhme, have not hopped on much of worth to metaphysics. *Their "illuminism," in fact, has left all the great difficulties of metaphysics on our hands.* These men have treated largely of what may be called *other-world lore*; making assertions not verifiable in ways open to ordinary psychical research. They have urged that there obtain supernormal realms of reality, but have failed to make the problem of reality, as a whole, easier to confront. It is, of course, one thing to find fault with "rational" thinking and quite another thing to be genuinely in a position to dispense with it! There may exist superhuman beings, of whom we know nothing, who are complete illuminists, not merely in desire, but also in fact. But confining, as we must, our outlook to history and historical names, we find nothing in mysticism which calls for special remark. The tree as it grows here and now must be judged by its fruits. And we must not be held too sceptical if we ask, What solid *metaphysical* advance have the historical mystics ever helped us to achieve?

Such illuminist knowledge as comes to us is mainly, perhaps, discoverable in the work of philosophers and men of science who are not, so far as their overt recognition of method is concerned, illuminists at all (Part I. Chap. I. § 7). Thus Tyndall speaks of

<sup>1</sup> Emerson.

<sup>2</sup> The ignoble and the maniacal mystics, who are common enough, may be ignored.

inductions which show "a kind of spiritual inspiration." Thus Locke himself says that "the thoughts that come often unsought, and, as it were, drop into the mind, are commonly the most valuable of any we have." But alleged illuminist aperçus are only to be held of value when such that they throw light on actual presentative or representative fact. Statements as to the "Back o' Beyont," and statements which feign experience when no genuine experience exists, form the stock-in-trade of various mystical creeds which please the crowd. Such creeds, like candidates before they are elected, promise much which they cannot possibly make good. In the name of illuminism, beliefs little short of fantastic have been thrust on uncritical folk. It will be well to reject on principle all mystical sayings which cannot, directly or indirectly, be verified in empirical fact. The Augean stables of mysticism can be cleaned out in no other way.

We may sum up these observations as follows. Thinking is *not* merely for "doing." I may build a "system," or, perhaps, under conditions not yet realised, I may enjoy a mystical consciousness superior to such a "system." Both these ideals can be pursued as ends, and not merely as means. The cognitive interest may suffice for me. There is no necessity why I should want to *do anything with it*. It stands for one very important form in which my Centre passes into a richer and more intense life.

#### THE CENTRE NOT AN INERT TOTALITY CONDITIONED SOLELY FROM BELOW.

§ 6. It is certain that my Centre is very largely conditioned *from below*—reflects at first idly a dynamic



on which it does not react. The primitive unfolding of its content, one may say, just occurs *within it*, and is not determined *by it* working as a whole. Its experience presupposes extra-organic appulse and organic conditions which in their turn presuppose natural process extending into the pre-nebular past. This past exists *only* in the character of the "specious" present (which consciousness here and there lights); it has changed into, been absorbed in, the momentary situation which the Time-Flux presents. "Whence," asks Spencer, "comes the power of organising experiences? Whence arise the different degrees of that power possessed by different races of organisms and different individuals of the same race?" Well, there are, at least, the biologists', the geologists', and the astronomers' pasts to be allowed for; had these been other than what they were, the present conscious Centre would not be unfolding as what it is.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, then, that *this* Centre will have its growth, in the main, determined by conditions operative from below. But even these conditions appear in its contents, and to this extent are not foreign at all. And we cannot exclude one important condition which may react on its growth and determine this *from above*. The *novel* Centre does not include inertly what is erupted from the dark. The testimony of consciousness is to the effect that, working as a whole, it counts for something as well. This view may or may not lead to the rejection of what is called "Determinism," but in any case it seems imposed on us if Experience in its fulness is to be faced frankly.

<sup>1</sup> There is another past also to be allowed for, which we shall consider in Part III. Chap. V.



## EXPERIENCE A TERM APT TO MISLEAD

And here a digression seems permissible. This word Experience is apt to mislead. Experience, as we are using the term, means the outward *and inward* present. But it is used often to mean only the outward present. And there exist schools who have sought to *derive* the contents of the Centre solely from this improperly emphasised, and abstractly regarded, outward present. The attempt cannot succeed. Not even the "matter" of inward experience is borrowed from an outward source. Thus the "image" or representation of a blue sky occurs *partly* because the presentation of a blue sky occurred *before*. But the image, for all that, is a novel fact, a fresh presentation of a secondary sort, not an old one which has been hoarded up in "Memory" and grown faint. And, of course, the constructions into which the image enters may be strikingly new in "form" as well as in respect of the representation of their "matter."

"CONTACT WITH ACTUAL THINGS" NOT THE SOURCE  
OF ALL OUR BELIEFS

The most absurd phase of this theory makes "contact with actual things" the source of all our beliefs. It is needful to say with Bain that "so considerable are other sources as to reduce this seemingly preponderating consideration to comparative insignificance."<sup>1</sup> Bain adverts to the "innate impetuosity" of believing that what is will continue to be, to the influence of strong emotions and predilections, and to the effect of society in propagating and iterating propositions. He regards such "contact," in fine, as not even a very important

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, i, 270. He is criticising Spencer.

source of belief. We must not forget, of course, how this "contact" has to be understood. The "contact," for me, is—*just my object-consciousness!* I am only conscious within my circle. I am not directly aware of perceptions *and* objects: the perceptions *are* the objects as felt over against the residual portion of my Centre. Thus I *believe* in physical objects and their relations; my belief in them is the subjective side of the fact that they appear, occupy the attention, and are therefore real. I believe, however, in much more than such objects and their relations. The "*physically real*" is only a portion of my conscious experience.<sup>1</sup> And this portion, so far from dictating *all* my beliefs, is itself slowly transformed in virtue, in large measure, of beliefs which it has not produced.

Bain notes some obvious psychological objections to

<sup>1</sup> I may believe in many sorts of reality; in a physical, ethereal, or "astral," or imaginary, or conceived, or mythological round table, or even in a "table in itself." All this implies classing. The table is *physically* real if it belongs to the cosmos of my body, of furniture-vans, houses, trees, and rocks. A ghost is popularly voted "unreal" when it cannot move the table or upset the arrangements of the house. It does not belong to the realm of *physical* fact. A "stone-throwing" ghost is classed otherwise! Of course, the reservation of the epithet "real" for the domain of physical fact only is quite absurd.

Belief is hardly an emotional state (for the contrary view, cf. James, *Principles of Psychology*, ii. 284 *et seq.*). It seems a name for the awareness of realities, however these are *classified*. I find no trace of emotion in my belief in objects as I glance round this room. These strike on my notice quite coldly. And my belief in yon landscape is essentially the presence of an emotionally indifferent fact. Belief is called intense when the awareness of reality is complicated with stirring organic feelings. Allied with such feelings, the real believed-in dominates over competing contents of consciousness, becomes more real, is solely "attended to," as the phrase goes, and thus controls action and thinking.

the "contact" view. The general objection which we are considering here goes deeper.

### THE CENTRE IS A NEW POWER IN THE COSMOS

My Centre may be likened to a Giant whose head, trunk, legs, and arms have been put together by pygmies. The pygmies are what we have called the minor centres. At the outset the Giant lies supine, or moves only as he is made to do. Slowly, however, he begins to feel himself as a Whole, and with this awakening a change comes over the scene. He arises, and lo! so far as may be, the pygmies become subjects who subserve the life of an overruling might. The Centre, in fine, is a novel whole which has needs which its contents, as severally considered, cannot possess. Struggling as a new power in the cosmos, it subordinates *to its life-ends* the contents which are coming to it from the dark.<sup>1</sup>

### ITS FUNDAMENTAL INTEREST

The fundamental interest of the Centre is development, expansion, realisation, enhanced life. It must master and organise its microcosm: like the Platonic Demiurge, confronted with the antagonising Hyle, it must struggle, within its limitations, to shape what it cannot create. There will be a striving, at any rate, for practical success and pleasant living,

<sup>1</sup> This involves what can be described in the symbolic language of mechanical physics as a novel "distribution" of "motion" among the "molecules" of the brain: a distribution which, failing the dynamic *from above*, would not take place. But abstract working symbolism of this sort must not be imported into metaphysics.

perchance for knowledge, for ethical and æsthetic betterment as well. The contents coming from presentation must be apperceived in such fashion that they abet *practical thinking and doing*. Errors, prejudices, convenient working notions, illusions, banal dogma, and partial views—even the sway of the empty “iterated” proposition — may further its interests here. Truth is not always sought, nor is it always desirable. Sensible content, again, may be so transformed that it can feed, in manageable shape, the *theoretic or cognitive interest*. *Ethical and æsthetic* ends, humble or elevated, cannot be ignored. *All such developments imply beliefs that do not come from, but are added to, the “contact with actual things.”*

#### SUPERADDED BELIEFS

The presentative real has always a *representative* escort. And the full-blown objective, or “contact with actual things,” is replete with superadded matters of belief, some of which are true, others false, but all of which tend to be more or less of use. Consider Smith’s momentary impressions. They may have added to them God, Ejects of all sorts, THE World, a conceived Unitary Time and Space (or rather spaces), Matter, Forces, Causes and Effects, Energies, Essences, Things, Molecules, Atoms, Electrons, Ether, and so forth. This supplementation of crude experience is extensive, and from a practical point of view may be entirely satisfactory. The Centre feels at home with, and lives pleasantly in, the result; it has set its house in some order, and that is an achievement not to be despised. To live with practical success, enjoying a certain command over facts, with power to subject



them to one's needs and to grasp them more or less synoptically—be the theoretic errors what they may—is no mean feat. Some of these superadded matters of belief, *i.e.*, Ejects, are obviously not given in crude outward experience at all. Others contain elements which appear in the outward given. Still, as constructions or inventions, they are not lifted bodily from the given, and merely restored to it surreptitiously anon. Instances are Matter, Force, and conceived Spaces and Time. The case of Causes and Effects deserves mention. We have seen how the primitive belief in Causality came to exist (Part II. Chap. IV. § 11). And we have seen that conceived *separate* "causes" and "effects" are of our own making. The point to remark is that these theoretically indefensible Causes and Effects are of practical worth. They conduce to the handling of the microcosm—are aids in the furthering of a portion of our conscious life. "*La méthode de pensée la plus facile*," observes Gaultier, commenting on Nietzsche, "*est victorieuse de la plus difficile*." There are "variations," and there is a struggle in which the most useful variation must win. But Causality, as used by the plain man and the man of science, is certainly not a gift thrown at us from outward experience, as it comes unsupplemented and in its crude original way.

#### "UNITIES" ARE MADE BOTH FOR US AND BY US

"Unity" is instructive, because it well shows the Centre taking up the work of object-making where the lower dynamic leaves off. An object is detached from its continuum and from other objects long before anything like conceptual unity is born. It *stands out*, and this standing out is the work of activities

that have operated from below. A dog does not conceive as a unity the mouse—the object is just thrust on its consciousness or comes. But, again, there are innumerable unities which are born from need—are *superadded* purposively, as the interests of the unfolding Centre dictate. Thus I isolate the Lyskamm, Castor and Pollux, and the Breithorn, in furtherance of my practical life. The mountain-block whence I carve them exists in solid singleness after all! Such superadded unities are legion, and they respond clearly to the need felt to break up the given for the purposes of practical life.

#### SCIENCE IS THE WORK OF THE "NEW POWER"

Science, of course, is no mirror of our "contact with actual things." In James's words: "The most persistent outer relations which science believes in are never matters of [outward]<sup>1</sup> experience at all, but have to be disengaged from under experience by a process of elimination—that is, by ignoring conditions which are always present. The *elementary* laws of mechanics, physics, and chemistry are all of this sort. The principle of uniformity of nature is of this sort: it has to be *sought* under, and in spite of, the most rebellious appearances; and our conviction of its truth is far more like a religious faith than like assent to a demonstration."<sup>2</sup> The chaos of crude experience might be held to give uniformity the lie! It has been desired to superadd the belief in uniformity to a given which seemed to most men at one time to reject it! We cannot even now be sure that the belief is unreservedly true. Voltaire himself suggested that a

<sup>1</sup> The bracket is inserted by me.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, ii. 637.



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certain amount of indeterminism might obtain in Nature. Phrase the matter in mechanical terms. We can conceive of situations in which a moving "mass" could pursue two or more paths, the "forces operative" in these several directions being exactly balanced. The particular path pursued would illustrate a mechanical indeterminism. You may say that the "forces" never can be exactly balanced, but the universe, after all, is big, and your saying seems a trifle venturesome.

The truth is that we *want* uniformity. We want the order of Appearances to square with our reasonings and calculations. If this order did not meet us half-way, we should be undone. Luckily, the uniformity-notion works very usefully, even though indeterminism (say for a Demiurgic spectator) may sometimes be fact. But, be this as it may, the belief in Uniformity is not a gift of the "contact with actual things."

"The conceiving or theorising faculty," observes James, "works exclusively for the sake of ends that do not exist at all in the world of impressions received by way of our senses, but are set by our emotional and practical subjectivity. It is a transformer of the world of our impressions into a totally different world—the world of our conception; and the transformation is effected in the interests of our volitional nature and for no other purpose whatsoever." But we have seen that knowledge, while it realises my end, is not necessarily to be regarded as a means by which something ulterior is to be reached. I am not always in search of knowledge just to do something with it. I know, and I rest in my knowledge until I can know



better. The dominantly practical side of much of science, and especially of mathematico-mechanical<sup>1</sup> science, cannot be gainsaid. An illuminist knowledge, such as some superhuman beings may enjoy even now, would have no use for this sort of thinking. But science undoubtedly feeds a theoretic as well as a practical interest, gives *some* grasp of wide tracts of reality which are not otherwise to be embraced in a comprehensive synoptic way. And abstractly symbolic procedures themselves have a theoretic interest when we regard them just as appearance which certain levels of conscious development display. Nothing comes amiss to the cognitive interest, which aims at awareness of all that the universe contains.

#### "DIVINE" PHILOSOPHY THE WORK OF THE "NEW POWER"

"Divine" philosophy belongs essentially to the cognitive interest, though incidentally it may have very important bearings on conduct, as we shall see later. The Centre, in seeking to grasp reality, unfolds

<sup>1</sup> Mathematics does not take its principles from the outward given, but we are not, therefore, to appeal to "innate ideas." Lewes observes of the principles of arithmetic and geometry that "their terms being rigorously defined and the relations being simple, there is no possibility of a change not at once destroying the intuition" (*Hist. of Phil.*, ii. 455). They belong to a conceptual order which is formed naturally, but inwardly, and then imposed on experience. Such principles are excellently dealt with by James (*ibid.*, ii. 664-5, and elsewhere). They have not "a legislating character even for all possible experience. They are primarily interesting only as subjective facts. They stand waiting in the mind, forming a beautiful ideal network; and the most we can say is that we *hope* to discover outer realities over which the network may be flung so that ideal and real may coincide." The just mean between *a priorism* and crude empiricism seems here exactly attained.



and develops, also, itself. If *the body* could pass a criticism on such thinking, it would describe it as a mere frittering away of energy, as sheer waste. Philosophy need not subserve, and may be positively noxious to, the bodily life. A large portion of every library attests the fact that thinking is an end and not merely a means. The most convinced pragmatists, like Professor James, discuss "categories" and swell our knowledge as to the "Perception of Space"! The "efferent currents" which abet physical doing call for no superfluous activity of this sort.

#### THE "NEW POWER" IN ART AND MORALITY

Æsthetic attitudes and the higher imaginative processes reveal the Centre developing *its* life. All these mental activities waste energy, if we are to call "wasted" all *implicated neuroses* which are useless to the body. The higher imaginative processes, which are too little noticed by psychologists, are specially to be remarked. The material is taken, or in part taken, from content which is outwardly perceived, but it is the interests OF THE CENTRE which determine how this plastic material shall be recast. Were the dynamic *from below* the sole source of what we possess, it is safe to say that the epic, the romance, and, in general, the creations of Fine Art could not appear.

Morality (which is not merely social) will occupy us anon. Considered in respect of a solitary Centre, of a "last man" on a planet, its guiding principle is not far to seek. The Centre ought to pursue ends which promise to result in the largest, fullest, richest

measure of life possible.<sup>1</sup> These ends are not wholly dictated by the dynamic from below. On the contrary, the ideal life of the Centre may be realised at the cost of struggle with the working of the subordinate psychical lives which appear in it. It achieves its positive advance, not by accepting, but rather by "negating" the original given which it confronts.

#### REASON AND THE DYNAMIC "FROM ABOVE"

§ 7. The name "Reason" refers us to nothing mysterious—even the loftiest valid generalisations found on the noticing of what is thrust up on to the conscious level. But when I generalise, the noticing is not the same as that previously discussed (see note, p. 209). It is a felt sameness amid difference, an awareness of *agreements* amid obscuring and warring contrasts, that now becomes the decisive fact. This noticing may be of the nature of a passively received fact, but it may also imply the active life of the Centre in pursuit of *its* special interests or ends. We require to consider the Centre (1) as an inert totality erupted from below, and, again, (2) as a totality that determines, at least to some considerable extent, its special life. The distinction has been present to psychologists, who have failed to grasp its significance in full. Thus Romanes observes that "a *generic* idea [Recept] is generic because the particular ideas of which it is composed present such obvious points of resemblance that they spontaneously fuse together in consciousness; but a *general* idea is general because the points of resemblance are obscured

<sup>1</sup> Assuming, of course, that it is worth while to continue being conscious at all.

from immediate perception and therefore could never have fused together but for the aid of intentional abstraction, or of the power of a mind knowingly to deal with its own ideas as ideas.”<sup>1</sup> The phraseology is open to criticism, but the feature on which stress should be laid is clear. There is a purposive struggle involved in the getting at many of the likenesses on which advanced generalisation founds. And the purposes in question are such as concern *the Centre* which pursues ITS life as a living dynamic whole. The Centre may work in the line of greatest resistance as measured by pains. It seems to suppress and accent its contents so that they may contribute more markedly to the furthering of *its* career. “Knowingly to deal with its own ideas as ideas” implies the dynamic from above. We are in the presence of a novel Whole: a reality which uses this or that content as means and material for its own growth. And incidentally the psychology which ignores this Whole and talks of a bare series of “ideas” shows bankrupt indeed. Language refuses to record the doings of a *bare series* at all! There is over-ruling Might which the members of the supposed series subserve.

#### FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM

§ 8. The recognition of this Might must be emphasised in any controversy touching the alleged

<sup>1</sup> *Mental Evolution in Man*, p. 68. It should be noted, however, that all “general ideas” do not involve voluntary effort; some, in fact, to use an expression of Locke’s, “dropping into” consciousness. There is a flash of felt similarity which may come *unsought* and is merely fixed by language. Romanes is considering what is really only an important class of “general ideas.” But the existence of this class, so it seems to the writer, attests a dynamic that cannot be supposed to proceed wholly from below.

Freedom of the Will. Ordinary volition shows a struggle initiated from below. Certain motives, which may include pleasures and pains, force themselves into prominence, or, rather, are prominent because forcible. Action results from such motive or group of motives as holds attention the best. In the case of special effort-attended volitions, the struggle is modified from above. In the one case we appear, even to ourselves, psychical automata; in the other case the Centre seems to react on—to further and thwart—features of content which are thrust on its ken. The Libertarian, or believer in the “Freedom of the Will,” has obviously this latter case in view. And he urges that, when so willing, he enjoys a certitude, attested by direct feeling, that *he* counts for something in the struggle which results in, and sustains, choice.

Much hangs by this word “he.” It is objected by Spencer that:—

“By speaking as though there were a mental self, present to his consciousness and yet not included in the composite mass of emotion and thought, he is led into the error of supposing that it was not this composite mass of emotion and thought which determined the action. While it is true that he determined the action, it is also true that the aggregate of his feelings and ideas determined it, since during its existence this aggregate constituted his entire consciousness—that is, constituted his mental self.”<sup>1</sup>

It has been further objected that the effort-feelings, on which Libertarians often lay stress, only attend volitions in which “the active power is not fully

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, i. 500.



equal to the work" (Bain). They mark, it is urged, defect or waste of bodily energy, not the sway of a self-determining "Ego" which purchases its liberty with pain.

An alleged abstract Will-Faculty need not be discussed. And the "Ego" of the popular philosopher and the "aggregate" of Spencer are alike myths. It may be admitted that volitions, like all other results, flow from, and are determined by, conditions. These conditions, however, implicate the Feeling-Whole or Centre. This Whole is nothing apart from its content; it lives, we may say, entirely in and through its aspects. Still, it is not less, but more, real than those partial aspects which are termed "emotions," "motor-ideas," and so forth. It may show as a mere continuum, but it may, also, manifest as a genuine reactive power or might. It is genuinely a power, seeing that its activity limits the activity of opposed powers. There is a further consideration on which due stress must be laid. Time and Change are real. Hence matters are always being *really* decided in conscious choice. The volitional process is part of that flux in which, from moment to moment, reality is recast. Reality is not perfect and finished, but is being made. It is a broad stream of change, not the show of a hypothetical Absolute which is eternally complete and lifted above time. In this stream every eddy, every petty furthering or thwarting conscious act, is an influence which assuredly counts.

I urged (§ 7) that my Centre is a "new power" in the cosmos, and that this power makes a difference to the stream of being. The story of the Centre refutes the view that its life is the sum or by-product of

activities erupted from below. It shapes, to a great extent, its own ends; is no inert mirror of activities which it is powerless to check and control.

### SPONTANEITY AND MOTIVES

Regarded abstractly as will, sentient life emerges from the sub-conscious, and seems at first an inert whole, an arena only of changes initiated from below. The pygmies (p. 219) move the Giant's limbs and body—he is aware of what is going on, but he is not reacting dynamically on what occurs. What happens when a higher volitional process, attended by the feeling of effort, takes place? Well, the motives are still *given*: thrust up from the sub-conscious as before.<sup>1</sup> And, just as before, there is struggle: struggle as to what motive or motives shall hold attention and persist in consciousness. "The whole drama of the voluntary life hinges on the amount of attention, slightly more or slightly less, which rival motor ideas may receive" (James). That of which there is keenest awareness tends to produce appropriate action. At this stage, however, the furthering and thwarting of motives is not a process erupted wholly from below. The Centre, with its novel life-ends, has to react. And this Centre is a power having interests impossibly present to the contents, taken severally, which it displays. There arises, accordingly, a struggle between the interests of the Centre as over-ruling life and the interests, if we may use the word, of certain of the minor lives which it contains. The Centre accents and thwarts special

<sup>1</sup> "Motiveless volition (or 'casualism') a true Libertarianism should reject: *all conscious freedom is motivated*. The thing to remember is that the motivation does not exhaust the fact" (cf. my *Riddle*, p. 344).

contents, seeking to make *these* and their like more dominant, and to drive *those* and their like back into the sub-conscious. Alogical at root, it is a striving or activity which must realise itself on congenial lines. And when it favours, and, so far, identifies itself with, one group of states, the opposed groups at once show as *foreign* to a surprising degree. Thus the individual "battling with passions" tends to regard these latter as not himself.

#### A RIGID DETERMINISM REJECTED

Thus the deterministic theory of volition is erroneous unless the conditions, whence flow action, include the Centre or Feeling-Whole. And this Whole is dynamic. It seems to further and check the *intensity* with which certain of its modes compete in consciousness. Consciousness itself is just intense life. And in what is called "free willing" the *livening* of motive feelings is the one all-important fact. This livening, again, lies in the direction of those *wider* interests, the possession of which marks off the Centre from the minor centres or reals which it contains.

It will be asked, "What bounds are set to this livening of content by the Centre? The momentary modification effected is ordinarily, perhaps, slight." Well, the livening may be slight. Still, there is *no certainty of prediction* as to how far it may go. Determinists are now outflanked. The willed activity results, let us allow, from conditions, but one of these said conditions seems altogether unique. There is suggested a genuine freedom—the spontaneity of the Feeling-Whole in which I ground.<sup>1</sup> This spontaneity

<sup>1</sup> Indeterminism involves incidentally rejection of the dogma [symbolic] that the quantity of cosmic "Energy" is fixed. Novel

seems experienced fact. We could accept it, therefore, without assimilating it to other facts. Its reality is not dependent on our ability to explain it. On the other hand, it would be interesting if the hard fact—if fact it be—could be taken over in some less brutal way (Part III. Chap. i. § 16).

We shall offer some observations later respecting a distinction between spontaneous and caused activity.

### EFFORT

Effort, physiologically regarded, answers to a certain kind of nervous overstrain, wastage, and defect. Metaphysically viewed, it bespeaks hindered or thwarted psychical life in certain "minor centre" regions in (what in shadow-object language we call) the cortex. In the struggles of the major Centre with the minor centres, and of these latter with one another, there obtain furtherances and thwartings—hence attendant feelings of pleasure and pain. The general issue as to pleasures and pains has already been discussed (Part II. Chap. V. § 7). The pains of effort mark pursuit of an end implicated with a particular kind of thwarting—that of certain minor centre complexes in which "the active power is not fully equal to the work." One of the most remarkable facts that confront us is the power of the Centre, in pursuit of its *special and peculiar* life-ends (e.g. knowledge), to hold fast to certain work in defiance of the pains

accessions of "energy" mark the Time-process. The Conservation doctrine works well for physical science, because these accessions at any given moment are so slight that they can be ignored in practice. The doctrine itself is quite unverifiable when the entire sweep of appearances, *psychologic and other*, comes under survey. It has no claim to be called "true," but only "useful."



which spring from the thwarting of the minor centres. A struggle in the teeth of pain, often unrelieved by any considerable pleasure, is one of the commonest experiences of the thinker. The Giant, undeterred by such pains, and pursuing an end which the standpoint of the pygmies (p. 219) does not even present, must be admitted to be decidedly awake—to be a power who is dominating the very material through which he comes to light.

We conclude as follows:—

The growth of the individual is such as cannot have been determined solely “from below”—by processes devoid of *the conscious values, devices, and purposes which we create*. The conscious centre is the nidus of novelty—of original developments which break with Nature and the sub-conscious past. And *some* of this novelty (which can flower only for conscious beings and is fostered in the teeth of great resistance and pain) reveals freedom. But the explanation of freedom is still to seek. To explain here is to generalise—to class cases of human spontaneity with spontaneity as it has obtained, and may be obtaining, elsewhere in the cosmos. That task lies ahead.

## Part III

### ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE GROUND OF APPEARANCE

##### THE GROUND OF APPEARANCE OR BECOMING, IF REAL, IS NOT ENTIRELY UNKNOWN

§ 1. WE have frequently made mention of the "continuous basis of Nature," of "transcendent regions" not directly present to our experience, and of processes of a sub-conscious sort which flow in the dark. And we have urged (Part II. Chap. IV. § 1) that the discussion of Nature could not be disposed of at once, but brings us finally face to face with a wider problem. We have, also, to recall that the Inward, as well as the Outward, spheres of experience compel notice, and that a theory of the Mother-stuff must deal with appearances surveyed as a whole. The riddle of the outward object is insistent, but the appearances comprised in the "Philosophy of Mind" demand treatment as well. We pass, then, to a consideration of what the Mother-stuff, or ultimate Ground of Becoming, really is. What is this Power which finds expression in Nature, in the subjective history of man and animal, in morality, law, politics, art, religion, science, philosophy, and the like? Well, *once that we admit it as real*, its fundamental character

is plain. Its character, in a word, is psychical, *i.e.* essentially the same as that of the appearances which we know directly. The Ground is not, indeed, conscious, in so far as it is considered just as a Ground. But considered also as appearing in us, it takes shape, and displays itself, in the content which consciousness lights. An entirely unknown Ground could not, except verbally, be made the subject of discussion at all. This much of our case has been made good already. But as yet we seem hardly in sight of the desired goal.

BUT IS IT REAL OR A MERE BROCKEN-SPECTRE OF  
THOUGHT? IT REMAINS A HYPOTHETICAL AT  
BEST.

§ 2. It will now be asked, "Why affirm the reality of this Ground at all?" And in reply I must concede that I am treading a speculative path. I am no longer near the realm of the certain. It was understood originally that the method of Adequation involved the supplementing of what I know directly, and that in escaping in thought from the circle of the individual I left the sphere of the indubitable behind. (Part I. Chap. II. § 24). I am entirely certain only of that which I feel. But I strive to supplement this narrow knowledge, to feign in thought experience which I do not possess, and I do so in obedience to urgent behests. The clue is Relativity. Anything that appears in my Centre shows relativity to something else therein; the Centre, too, as a whole, suggests continuity with unrepresented content beyond. I pass out of the Centre, then, in idea, though never in sober fact, and I take the risk implied in the theoretic supplementing and buttressing of my practical beliefs.

It may be that my experience merely comes, and that there can be no truthful supplementation of it at all. On the other hand, I have shown what the belief in human and animal Ejects, if this belief stands on fact, implies. If I can go out in thought truly to certain transcendent Centres, I can, it appears, go out to a *transcendent Mother-stuff*, in which I and a host of alien inferred centres, subhuman, human, and perhaps superhuman, have their being. The *esse* of this Ground does not depend on the incident of its being inferred by me. It preceded my present consciousness in time, and is active in indefinitely varied modes, whether that consciousness shows content or suffers eclipse. Solipsism, then, has yielded to belief in an enveloping order in which I float. So far, so good. I have crawled (in idea) out of my circle to some purpose. But I am now about to broach ultimate questions. And in discussing these I bring the limitations of my standpoint once more clearly to mind. Let me solve the problem of the Ground with the following reservation always in view. The Ground, taken as something *more than* my Centre, is, at best, hypothetical. The hypothesis may be satisfactory, but I cannot verify it completely in an empirical way. On the other hand, the alien centres, recognition of which has led up to this hypothesis, fall likewise outside my circle. My position is such that I cannot consciously penetrate into their lives. I entertain, however, no appreciable doubt as to their reality. And it may be that I shall entertain no very embarrassing doubt as to the reality of the Ground in which they and I alike live, move, and have our being. The Ground, however, seems more *remote* than the Centres, and it is well that attempts to reach it should be examined with care.



## FAITH AND THE GROUND OF BECOMING

§ 3. We are to ignore, of course, the assertions of Faith. The Faith-worlds are important practically, and are often intensely real (Part I. Chap. I. § 3), but they fall outside metaphysics. Faith takes direct inward reality for that wider reality which is to be reached only painfully and mediately in idea. Here we require fact which exists, not only in imaginary worlds, but outside these and in its own right. Now Faith, in the long run, is apt to lose confidence and to seek support from metaphysics. Its beliefs, quitting their subjective fastness, come then entirely within our ken. In respect of our present inquiry, Faith maintains sometimes, but not always, that the sole Ground of Becoming is a personal being or god. It will be asked to *justify* its belief in the manner which philosophical Theism has approved.<sup>1</sup>

## INTUITIONISM AND THE GROUND OF BECOMING

§ 4. Intuitionists of various schools have made futile attempts to reach the Ground. The trouble is that intuition which does not *present* the alleged "intuited" is useless. Recall that the intuitionists, like other folk, stand in their Centres. How, then, do they contrive to jump suddenly out of them? These philosophers in a hurry want a secure basis for thinking. But, as each one wants a different basis, there results disagreement as to what intuition attests. *Quot homines, tot dei*—or even Absolutes! This man "intuites" a personal, and often rude, Jewish, Mohammedan, or Miltonic god; another, *e.g.* Schelling,

<sup>1</sup> The fallacy of basing Theism on alleged revelation will be considered later.

sights a spiritual Absolute; another, *e.g.* Spencer, with his "indefinite consciousness," an Unknowable Absolute. Intuitionism, like Faith, gives rise to a babel of discordant voices. There is, of course, a genuine experience involved, and I conceive it to be just this. *What really is intuited is the Centre-continuum which is genuinely felt* (Part. II. Chap. II. § 8), and *which is certainly more than the inward or restricted empirical self* (*ibid.*, § 7). Now the use made of the experience is improper. It occurs *within* the circle of an individual. But it is taken to reveal a reality, the vastly greater portion of which must fall *outside* this circle. In fine, the experience is used "transcendently," and serves to validate just what the particular intuitionist requires. Very noteworthy is the language of Spencer: "Our consciousness of the unconditioned being literally the unconditioned consciousness, or *raw material of thought*, to which in thinking we give definite forms, it follows that an ever-present sense of reality is the very basis of our intelligence."<sup>1</sup> What is this "raw material of thought" but the unbroken continuum of the Centre? It is an immanent fact, not a transcendent Absolute. And seeing, also, that it is "real existence" and is "known" likewise through and through, it is certainly not the *Unknowable* Absolute of which Spencer writes. Clearly there is a little mistake here, and the confusion is well worth noting.

The intuitionist, in fine, is right in pointing out the "real existence" within his Centre. He is wrong when he seeks to jump out of his circle and reach god or the Absolute at a bound. Let us abjure jumping and feel our way cautiously and patiently into the

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, p. 96.

Ultimate Ground. Perhaps, after all, our Centres are phases of that Ground. But we are to discover this, not by direct insight, but rather, it would seem, by way of indirect and symbolic processes of thought.

#### RATIONALISM AND THE GROUND: THE THEISTIC HYPOTHESIS

§ 5. There remain various views about the Ground which rest on inference and supply "proofs." Mediated propositions replace alleged immediate insight or intuition. A rationalistic Theism submits the first statement which will give us pause. I will take it as holding that the ultimate Ground of Becoming, *i.e.* of the flux of appearances, is god. This ultimate is regarded as *self-conscious*. And our concern is with the view that god is the *prius* of the entire world-order, including the innumerable finite individuals conceived as in it. We are examining a timeworn hypothesis as to the Ground. And god, taken as the Ground, is an hypothesis which we shall have to reject. Avoiding ambiguous language designed to conciliate critics, we shall avow ourselves atheists.

#### METAPHYSICAL ATHEISM IS COMPATIBLE WITH BELIEF IN A GOD OR GODS

It remains, withal, to consider a further hypothesis anon. There may obtain a conditioned god or gods. Such finite centres may have emerged from the Ground just as humbler centres, human and subhuman, have emerged. God is not the root, but a large branch, of the Tree of Life. It will be interesting to discuss this

view in its place. Meanwhile we must be careful to keep the two hypotheses well apart. A belief in god as Ground of Becoming may be false. But a belief in god (or gods) as a purposive, and even moral, factor within the Becoming may deserve our support. There is a further aspect of this belief to which attention, even at this stage, can be drawn. An evolved finite god might be discussed as "result," seeing that he arose in time, and did not originate the development which gave him birth. But he may be a "result" which attained greatness in a past beside which our starry heavens show young. A conditioned and developed god (or gods) might come to "a universal concentration"<sup>1</sup> period or cycle of cosmic Evolution *mature*. And, coming in this way, he would be the "supreme being" in fact—a "living God" to whom those who esteem religion could turn. A god pre-existing to *our* "evolution-era," and an important factor therein, a finite like ourselves, but of exalted knowledge, morality, and power, would suffice amply for religious needs. He would be, at least, the great ally of mankind in the struggle that takes place above the Dark Ground. And he might, as we shall see, be very much more.

#### A WORD TO THE PLAIN MAN

Here we desire, not beliefs which merely make the heart glad, but beliefs which are true. Still, to the

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is taken from Spencer, who, like Heraclitus, is for endless cycles of world-growth and destruction, arguing for "an immeasurable period during which the attractive forces predominating cause universal concentration, and then an immeasurable period during which the repulsive forces predominating cause universal diffusion—alternate eras of Evolution and Dissolution" (*First Principles*, p. 537).



plain man in earnest, with Theism we can say this: *The theory of the GROUND concerns only metaphysicians.* But the theory of a conditioned god or gods vitally concerns *you*. Never mind our Atheism. The schoolman's "sum-total of all reality and perfection" is certainly past all finding out; but he would be of no possible worth, save to philosophers, were he found! It is a conditioned god or gods that *you* want, though you use language which makes you seem to want more. A Finite god may exist. And, assuming that he exists, his attitude towards the Ground is, doubtless, as atheistic as ours!

#### THE THEISTIC HYPOTHESIS—IS GOD THE GROUND OF BECOMING?

##### (a) THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

§ 6. The ontological argument infers the reality of god from the concept of him which we are supposed to possess. There were two forms of this argument current before Kant's critique of Theism was written—that of the schoolman Anselm and that of Descartes. Anselm maintained that "God" stands for what is thought as the greatest of all realities. Now reality in his own right, as well as in our concepts, is greater than reality in our concepts alone; hence god is real in his own right. Descartes laid stress on the old doctrine of "essence." The concept of a most perfect and real being *implies* the *necessary existence* of its object, just as the concept "triangle" implies the attribute of having its angles = two right angles. We cannot suppress the implication without wrecking the concept. Kant's retort is that "existence" adds nothing to the concept, but merely determines its

relation to our knowledge. Thus when I say that "ghosts *exist*" I do not endow the concept "ghost" with a new attribute, but vary my mode of regarding it. When, again, I say that god does not exist, I leave the concept "god" quite unshorn of attributes. No march to *independent* actuality is possible by way of mere concepts. The ontological argument, urges Kant, is therefore invalid.

Hegel seeks to amend the ontological argument. Anselm and Descartes tried to pass from thought to reality beyond that thought. But for Hegel, of course, there is no reality beyond thought. The concept is valid, because it reveals the IDEA, or Logical, coming to consciousness of itself. Holding as absolute idealist to the unity of thought and reality, maintaining that "the thought that is in you is the thing itself," Hegel's adoption of the argument coheres well with his conceptual dialectic. The concept, which for Descartes leaps *beyond* experience, is valid for Hegel *within* experience; the latter being no other than the thought of the self-thinking Idea.

Conformably with views justified elsewhere, we must condemn the argument as follows:—(1) In the first place, the whole business of *conceiving* goes on within this or that finite Centre. The "Existence" of a conceptually established god is primarily presence in, and for, this or that Centre. There emerges no god who "exists" independently of these centres, or in his own right. (2) In the second place, the argument might be urged in the interest of a superpersonal Absolute, such as the Hegelian (as many interpret it) or that of Bradley. It is a friend, then, from whom Theists might wish to be saved.

## (b) THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

This argument (a *contingentia mundi*) exploits the "Law" of Causality,<sup>1</sup> but only so far as proves *convenient*. Ignoring alleged finite substances, let us regard the present state of the world as made up of events. The argument takes us from these "contingent," dependent events back to prior causal events, and thence regressively to a "necessary" independent existence which, having had no beginning, is uncaused. This necessary existence, or First Cause, is god. Now it is not shown, objects Kant, that the series of events had a beginning. But, even supposing that it had, must that beginning be referred back to god? Why a leap from necessary existence to the "sum-total of all Reality and Perfection"? The answer must be that only the Being *conceived* as the "sum-total, etc.," can be absolutely necessary. The cosmological argument, then, rests on the ontological and collapses along with it.

THE ARGUMENT HAS BEEN AMENDED: THE FLAW  
REMAINS

The statement of the Cosmological argument has been amended by later idealists. But the essence of the contention, *in respect of Theism*, has been extracted once and for all. No one can show, within the limits of the argument, why "necessary existence"—if such there be—should be taken as god; *i.e.* as a *self-conscious* or personal Ground. Such a taking seems to belong to the sphere of the thinking centre—to be an invention<sup>2</sup> wherewith *some* men seek to

<sup>1</sup> It was Leibnitz who urged, "Sans ce grand principe on ne saurait venir à la preuve de l'existence de dieu."

<sup>2</sup> Not a regulative *a priori* "Idea of the Reason" in the Kantian sense.

unify and complete their worlds. The necessary god "exists," but only in such heads as require his aid. There is no call as yet to suppose that he exists in his own right!

### (c) THE DESIGN ARGUMENT

The foregoing arguments are unsatisfactory, but that from Design, at first sight, seems to promise well. Nevertheless, it provides no means of establishing the reality of god as Ground. Its greatest possible measure of success would be to show that purpose, the activity of a *finite god* (or gods), has counted, and will count, for much in the particular "evolution era," to adopt Spencer's phrase, in which we arose.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE ARGUMENT

There are philosophical systems which lay stress on "unconscious purpose" and "design." Let us *assume*, however, what many writers would dispute, that design implies a conscious designer; and, further, that, in respect of *this* particular evolution-era, such design is fact. There is a spiritual power acting, not blindly like Schopenhauer's Will, but, as Kant has it, "as an intelligence by freedom." Let us allow that the unity of the designed arrangements, "as portions of a skilful edifice," as happenings which conspire to realise an orderly and general cosmic scheme, justifies inference to a single conscious god. *Even now we have not reached the goal.* We have reached a finite god, an 'architect' or Demiurge, but not god conceived as all-inclusive Ground. And we must be careful not to overrate this finite god. Thus we cannot credit him with wisdom greater than suffices to account for



arrangements in this imperfect world. This wisdom, and the power to form the world in accord with it, may be very great, but there is no warrant for terming them "perfect," "infinite," and so forth. Inference to moral "perfection," if our quest is a moral god, would be equally unjustified.

Kant's indictment of the argument may be condensed as follows:—There is, you assert, evidence of a designer. But what of the *given* "*material*" which is to take on a new form? To conceive the designer as *also* creator, you must recur to the cosmological argument! And, respecting the degree of design manifest, you have to note that perfection is not found in this world. Hence, no inference to an ideally perfect designer is warranted. You desire to cope with this difficulty. Then, the ontological argument must be appealed to once more, and the upshot of the discussion is this. The Design argument rests on the cosmological and ontological arguments, which have been shown already to be unsound. Rational Theology, he urges, is impracticable.

#### CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THEOLOGY MIGHT BE PRACTICABLE

Rational Theology is surely impracticable on the lines discussed by Kant. If we want to prove the existence of god in his scholastic guise, to wit, as the conscious "sum-total of all reality and perfection," we shall have to wait an indefinitely long time. But god in this shape is not required by metaphysics—is as useless to the thorough philosopher as he is to the plain man. Theology might be practicable if (1) it abandoned the attempt to make god the ultimate

Ground, and (2) addressed itself to the question of whether there obtains a finite god (or gods). The abstract, concept-juggling type of discussion must go. The live issue has to be decided, if not by us, at least by posterity, on *empirical* lines. I shall have something to say on the general considerations involved later.

(d) THE PERCEPTION OF REALITY, VIEWED AS  
EXPERIENCE, JUSTIFIES AN INFERENCE TO GOD

This argument comes from the mouths of certain idealists. For them Being is "presence to a conscious subject." God is presupposed by the fact that a cosmos exists. "The analogy of the perceiving consciousness is transferred to the universe or universe-consciousness, and, as perceived, reality is simply relation in time to a subject out of time, so is all the reality of the universe." God is not the mere "First Cause" of the crude cosmological argument, but the Self, an eternally complete consciousness,—the presupposition as well of finite individuals as of things,—which both goes beyond, and is immanent in, the fragmentary time-shows we face. Idealism of this type holds that self-consciousness "never began, because it never was not. It is the condition of there being such a thing as beginning or end."<sup>1</sup> We shall use this view to mediate a more empirically justifiable theory of the GROUND.

CRITIQUE OF THE ARGUMENT

These idealists cannot urge that I am directly aware of their god. The less could not include the alleged greater! I have to be asked to infer his

<sup>1</sup> Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 119.

existence. Now, how am I circumstanced for this task? I am primarily aware of content which appears *in my circle*. I supplement ideally this content; feign experience of an Enveloping Order. I have next to conceive both kinds of experience, the direct and the feigned, as reality *for god*. I am desired to "transfer the analogy" of my private consciousness to the universe. The limited sphere of reality which I face is, I am told, relation in time to a "timeless subject"; so, too, is that wider reality which I have come to believe in, and which I call the universe.

Once more, then, I have to recur to personal experience. The inferring of god is feasible *because my personal experience is what it is*. Empiricism, after all, is the only wear! Now, is it true that I have experience of a "timeless subject" which does not pass with events? It is not. We agreed long ago that "consciousness" is no medium in which feelings, discrete save for its relating of them, somehow float. Consciousness, which seems just the illuminated portion of the Centre, is nothing apart from content; and content is changeful or flows. I need not waste space in going over ground already covered ("Appearances and the Finite Centre"). But I will offer a few observations on the sole outstanding consideration of weight. It has been urged that a timeless self-conscious unity conditions the very perception of change. But this heroic solution of a difficulty is not required. The contents of my experience are phases of a Whole—of the alogical continuum which I call the Centre. "It is this Whole which embraces the relatively permanent *content* over against which Change is perceived. All contents flow, but not with equal rapidities and never apart." There are content-changes which happen

slowly, and, again, there are changes which happen quickly but do not stand out. And changes that are slow or unnoticed do not, in respect of the passing conscious experience, exist. I append a full rendering of the situation as follows:—

THE "TIMELESS SUBJECT"—WHAT IS IT WHICH  
PHILOSOPHERS HAVE MISTAKEN FOR THIS?

I am not always self-conscious. I may be just conscious — of green or drowsiness. And self-consciousness, as we saw long ago, is not timeless, but once "began" and has a history. Self and not-self are distinctions within my Centre and arose out of a neutrum; and the neutrum, again, arose out of process which was surely not my conscious experience at all! Now there is usually an appearance at the back of mistaken beliefs. What, then, is the appearance which has given rise to the doctrine of the "Timeless Subject" or Self? The reply is just this. My Centre shows an obscure subject-side, *in which* events may be unnoticed or barely noticed, but *over against* which momentarily objective events, or changes, stand out or "are perceived." The subject-side consists of content which is by no means changeless. The changes, however, occur too slowly or are too subdued to rise on to the passing conscious level.<sup>1</sup> In more popular language, the changes happen, but they are not attended to. At one extreme of philosophy, we shall recall, defective attention gave rise to the abstraction "Matter."<sup>2</sup> At the other extreme, we observe, it gives rise to the abstraction of the "Timeless Self."

<sup>1</sup> Reference to Part II. Chap. II. § 7 is invited.

<sup>2</sup> Part II. Chap. III. § 5.



## THE "TIMELESS SELF" IN INDIAN METAPHYSICS

This fiction of the "Timeless Subject" is not peculiar to conservative idealists in the West. It is of old standing in Indian metaphysics, where it appears under the name of the "Witness" Self. This Self, which is "self-positing" and "cannot be repudiated,"<sup>1</sup> is the unalterable real which shines through the illusions of change. More accurately, it is an abstraction. An ultimate is wanted, and defective attention brings this phantom to light.

EMPIRICISM SUPPORTS THE HYPOTHESIS OF A  
SUB-CONSCIOUS GROUND

§ 7. "Self-consciousness," in fine, is not self-positing or *causa sui*. Consider my Centre. Certain sorts of content are rapidly replacing old and rising on to the conscious level *in the process*, while a background of relatively permanent content, the nuclear mass of body-feeling, etc., maintains a more or less subdued awareness throughout. Let us note that consciousness shines brightly only in a small area of the Centre. There is a focal point, and away from this spot awareness shades off into the sub-conscious. Consciousness, *when present*, is inseparable from content — is the "form" in which experienced "content" comes. But content which takes on this form may be continuous with process that flows in the dark. In fact, consciousness seems an island in the sub-conscious: an island whose highest peak

<sup>1</sup> Sankara. Cf. Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 192-196.

shows clear, but whose lower levels and shores are shrouded in mist and menaced always by the encroaching sea. At the outset, indeed, my Centre awoke slowly to *find* its content such or such. And the conscious centres, of which I know, have all unclosed slowly in time; conscious life lighting what activity beneath its level has made. Below is the dark abyss into which they sink regularly, and into which, as many writers hold, they return finally at death. It is in this abyss of the sub-conscious that we are to locate what has been called the Ground.

#### THE GROUND—A MODIFIED NIHILISM CAN BE ENTERTAINED

§ 8. The Ground, if I am to suppose one, is psychical (§ 1). But, unlike Theists, I need not regard belief in a Ground as assured. There may be no Ground, and our conscious lives—the Centres, which are saturated with change—may show in the void. The old Buddhist nihilists held this view. And the view, after all, may be correct. Conscious being may flower without having a root. I do not press this view, but I note that it can be entertained. When, therefore, I come to discuss the Ground, I do so with the reservation that it may be myth. Empiricists must allow that there exists justification for doubt. A modified Nihilism suffices to give us pause.

#### THE CASE FOR OUR BELIEF IN THE GROUND

§ 9. But while Nihilism gives us pause, it has no power to hold us long. The case for the Ground has

been maturing during the entire course of Part II. First I examined my Centre, or rather that portion of it which is conscious. This was found to be real in a relativity, to be a whole not genuinely closed, but comprising the workings of other relative wholes, human and subhuman, within itself. These various wholes are not monads such as Pluralism holds so dear. They are not discretes which come to relation each in solid singleness secure; separates from whose *union* might result a world. They *are* only as they interpenetrate and mingle "contradictorily" with one another's being—a unity of mutually constitutive powers which interact. It is a UNITY-PLURALITY, an active continuum with continua, one stream showing travelling eddies, which I confront. And when I come to discuss the Ground, I cannot leave this empirical revelation behind.

Experience, as we saw recently, affords no basis of inference to a conscious *prius*. Experience goes to show that conscious life, which is of many grades, arises in time. Hence an old argument, already improved by the theistic idealists, may be improved once more. The *sub-conscious Ground is presupposed by the arising in time of the UNITY-PLURALITY of finite centres*, human, animal, and sub-animal. To cite von Hartmann, "The theory of the Unconscious<sup>1</sup> is the necessary, if tacit, presupposition of every objective or absolute idealism which is not unambiguously Theism." If we reject a modified Nihilism, *i.e.* the view that "states of consciousness" arise inexplicably in a metaphysical void, we are driven back on the sub-conscious as the fount and origin of all sentient life.

<sup>1</sup> "Sub-conscious" is better. Cf. § 11.

“APPEARANCE” AND “GROUND”—NOT ALL APPEARANCES ARE DIRECTLY EVOLVED FROM THE GROUND

Sentient experience includes that variable quantity of the real which is called “appearance.” The Ground is the “substance” or “essence” whose fundamentally psychical character these said appearances disclose. In so far as it becomes experience, the Ground abdicates its throne, and could it pass entirely into experience, there would be no Ground left to discuss. Complete daylight would have replaced the night. But while, in last resort, experience rises out of the Ground, it is not to be supposed that all forms of it were implicit therein originally *as such*. We are not to say of the Ground what Hegel did of his Logos or Idea, viz., that “it brings to its consciousness what it is in itself,” makes explicit or actual only what is implicit or virtual in it. Very novel developments occur within conscious centres—developments which presuppose these conscious finites, and which, failing them, could not pre-exist, implicitly, “potentially,” or in germ. The character of the Ground, viewed in one aspect, is to change its character. It passes, by gradual stages, into a conscious form. But that into which it passes conditions further and novel directions of change. At the outset the Ground reveals solely “what it is in itself”; but this showing is modified in the history of finite life. Thus morality and my pen are novelties not implicit, as such, in the Ground. Further, the Ground, which at this moment = the residual universe below the conscious level, must even now be in process of change. And happenings on the conscious level must help to determine what its future behaviour shall be. It is no Absolute, but is plastic



to some extent, having now over against it finites which limit its sway. We shall touch on this point, again, hereafter.

#### THE GROUND SERVES TO EXPLAIN HOW CONSCIOUS CENTRES ARE KEPT APART

Given this Ground, we understand how finite conscious centres appear and are kept apart—a problem which defies solution on other lines. These centres are insulated, as it were, from one another by regions which are sub-conscious. They are, in fact, ISLANDS IN THE OCEAN OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS. The “separateness” of my so-called “closed circle” is possible because it is divided from the “closed circle” of Smith by activities which have not reached the conscious level. Were such intervening activities on this level, our two “circles,” along with the intervening activities, would interlace. And here I may appeal to psychology. It is a familiar fact that separate “circles” or persons may arise in connection with one brain. Cases of two or three such “split off” personalities have been recorded. Sometimes the personalities seem quite opaque, and even hostile, to one another. They are “pathological,” of course, but why? Cortical connections between brain-areas are faulty? No doubt. But this is to say that the “closed circles” are insulated by sub-conscious activities.

I have spoken of “separateness,” but the sub-conscious activities which *space* conscious beings also unite them. My Centre is only separate from Smith’s in the sense that I am not directly aware of Smith’s conscious states. I have to symbolise them quite indirectly or in idea. Our “islands,” to this extent, lie

apart. But they would form one territory, were the "ocean" which connects, while it parts, them suddenly converted into dry land! This conditional isolation of the centres is significant, but its full meaning will not be borne upon us till later.

THE GROUND RECALLS SCHELLING'S "IMMEMORIAL BEING" — SCHOPENHAUER'S INDEBTEDNESS TO FICHTE AND SCHELLING.

§ 10. Schelling moves toward this Ground in his later theory of the Immemorial Being—the power which ousts Absolute Reason, and which, though impersonal and extralogical, works with the certitude of instinct.<sup>1</sup> His old Nature-philosophy is jettisoned, and appearance, which is posited by Freedom, is held not to be logically deducible at all. He comes, indeed, to think that "Will is the proper spiritual substance of man, *the ground of everything*." Fichte before him had spoken of "infinite striving." Here lie the veritable head-waters of Schopenhauer's theory of the Ground—of that extralogical Will which he opposes to the Hegelian Idea. Schelling is popularly credited only with the Absolute-Identity system which succumbed to, but was in part absorbed by, Hegelianism. He did much, however, to prepare the way for that metaphysical reformation which is thriving to-day.

SCHOPENHAUER AND THE UPANISHADS

Of course, Schopenhauer, no slavish admirer even of Kant, does not like "University Philosophers." Further, he drinks deeply, if not always wisely, at the

<sup>1</sup> The "Immemorial Being," strangely enough, has its herald in the old Norse mythology, wherein an impersonal, unbegotten power, Orlog, rules in secret and at the back of the personal gods.

fountains of Indian thought. He waxes enthusiastic over the Upanishads. His pessimism and his belief in the plurality of lives recall Eastern views. But his theory of the Ground goes back, in all likelihood, to the distinguished German philosophers whom he reviles. The Upanishads, at any rate, are silent as to the Will. The primitive concept of *Brahman* may have meant the propulsive force of creation (Max Müller). But the Brahman of the Upanishads is the Self, which is described as pure being, pure knowledge, and pure bliss, or, as in the Taittiriya Upanishad, as "knowledge, truth, and infinity." This Self is cognitive or rather cognition, not blind. This religious mysticism of the Upanishads gives rise to philosophical Monism of the unsatisfactory abstract sort. The Self, which does not change, is alone genuinely real. Hence the puzzle for the later Indian schoolmen and commentators is to explain how the world of "practically" real, changeful variety comes to arise. The task proves, of course, too onerous. The "infinite" abstraction has been made to negate finite concrete variety, and adequate philosophical thinking is at an end.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Advaita Vedantist creed has to appeal to Mâyâ, which fictitiously limits the Self. Mâyâ is neither being nor non-being, but the principle of cosmic illusion, a sort of Lockean "I know not what" co-eternal with the *seemingly*, but not really, determined Self (see my *Riddle*, pp. 298-301). This schoolman's device is born from the need of supporting the religious dogma of the Self with metaphysics. It is worth note, however, that sacred literature, as usual, is not consistent. In the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* the Self is described as having shaped itself after the shape of everything, "that it might unfold its essence." And the qualified Monism of Râmânuga, which accords with this saying, urges that the multiplicity of the manifested world was latent in the Self, and constitutes, therefore, a true revelation of its essence. This, at any rate, is an attitude that can be seriously discussed.



It will be admitted that Schopenhauer, who taught the blindness of the Ground, and who urged that "all truth and all wisdom lie ultimately in the perception," *i.e.* in appearances, is not a disciple of whom a Vedantist would be proud. The Self, Vedantism has urged, is cognition, and, as opposed to false appearances, "truth."

#### SCHOPENHAUER'S "WILL" CANNOT STAND

Schopenhauer's glory is to have fought ceaselessly against the view that "Thought," as conceived by the categorist, is the *prius*. But the Ground, while assuredly not *such* Thought, cannot possibly be identified with Will; and more especially with a Will which is above Time.

Schopenhauer is not a consistent writer. Thus Time, for him, as for Kant, is a form only of *our* knowing. But he forgets this when he comes to discuss the Will and its objectivation in Nature. Knowing is made brain-function, and self-consciousness the focus of cerebral activities. There is implied here an order which is prior in time to our knowledge of it, and the initial subjective idealism comes to grief. The Will, in fact, is a restless, changing Ground, which was changing even before conscious percipients had arisen—in brains—to become aware of it. It *began* to rush into manifestation, and in a remote future, so Schopenhauer hopes, will *cease* to do so. The difficulty is obvious. A further difficulty is found in the contrast between the alleged blindness of the Will and the remarkable purposiveness which Schopenhauer makes it display. Thus the elaborate *a priori* machinery whereby perception is effected calls for comment. Thus the power shaping the chicken in



the egg performs a task "complicated, well-calculated, and designed beyond expression."<sup>1</sup> Here is the flaw which von Hartmann sought to remove, by placing the Logical Idea along with Will in the Ground.<sup>2</sup> This hypothesis seems quite unsound, but for the moment we can let it pass. Purposive activity, however, is still on our hands. And purpose implies change; and change, again, time. There is an *end* in view, a "shall be" which is not yet. Further, purposiveness is not properly predicable of an unconscious Ground. It seems to presuppose relatively advanced *conscious* centres, with the subject-object distinction developed—centres *in which the quite secondary and derivative mode of activity called volition occurs*. "Unconscious" purpose, like "unconscious" pleasure and pain, is an abuse of words. An unconscious Ground may be active; but merely to act, and to be aware of action realising a consciously represented end, differ in kind.

"WILL" MEANS TOO LITTLE TO BE HYPOSTATISED AS THE GROUND—AND THE PROCESSES ON WHICH THE CONCEPT STANDS ARE SECONDARY.

"Will" is a concept which stands on human experiences of willing; and these experiences are not simple and native to the unfolding centre, but complex and of the developed sort. They belong to a fairly advanced stage of conscious life. And willing which is bare of content or ideas is, of course, a thing utterly unknown. When I become aware of it, as such, or "think" it,

<sup>1</sup> *The World as Will and Idea*, Haldane and Kemp's translation, ii. 473; cf. also ii. 485 and i. 190.

<sup>2</sup> "The idea of the world-process is the application of the Logical to empty volition" (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*, Coupland's translation, iii. 182).

there is always an ideal aspect implied. On the other hand, though willing always implies ideas, there are ideas and presentations which do not (though they might) enter into processes of will. Even Schopenhauer allowed for æsthetic experiences in which the will is temporarily hushed.<sup>1</sup> And there are many restful moods wherein feeling seems just to come. Will, in fine, if we have our eyes on empirical willing, means too little to be hypostatised as the Ground. Further, the processes on which the concept stands are secondary. You will urge, perhaps, that Will means something not adequately revealed in my psychical history. Very well. But in this event do not use the familiar term in a novel and non-natural sense.

THE GROUND IS NOT UNCONSCIOUS, OR SUPER-CONSCIOUS, BUT SUB-CONSCIOUS — WHAT CAN WE SAY ABOUT IT?

§ 11. The Ground is not, properly speaking, unconscious, nor, again (as I once urged), super-conscious, but sub-conscious. That is to say, it is *below* personality, not sheerly blind, but possessing a dim indefinite awareness which is heightened and made definite *as* conscious life. We urged that it is presupposed by the arising of finite centres in time. If this contention is of worth, the consciousness, as well as the content, of the centres has to be explained. Consciousness, we find, is inseparable from content; and content below *our* level must still display this characteristic in an obscure form. But what is the full character of the sub-conscious Ground? Well, in this present stage of the universe it is doubt-

<sup>1</sup> Another eccentric performance of his Ultimate!

less very different from what it was. The Ground now means only the *residual* universe below conscious life; and innumerable conscious beings, including perhaps a god or gods, have reacted on their base and made it differ, perhaps vastly, from the primeval Hyle. And while subject to reactions from above, the Ground will have changed concurrently within itself. *We* inquirers have arisen in a late stage of its history. We cannot, therefore, say much as to what it was before the history of conscious finites began. But we seem justified in saying something worth note. It was psychical, not, however, "blind unconscious fecundity," to borrow a phrase of Kant's, but sub-conscious; its character included the power to change its character, so that it could have a history or development. It was no Absolute, save in the sense that its conditions lay wholly within itself. It was "complete" in respect of these conditions, but it was not, also, "perfect" and "finished" as the traditional Absolute is held to be. It was above the "law" of Contradiction, for change is as "contradictory" as anything can be. It was active, and could become what it was *not*. Metaphysics, so far from dealing with "eternal and unalterable reality," confronts a universal becoming of which, probably, no finite, human or superhuman, can descry the end. This slow transformation of the primeval Ground—a transformation in which conscious finites, as they develop, must count for more and more—constitutes cosmic "progress."

The primeval Ground was not bare Will. Activity, however, was there, and if by "Thought" is meant only a vague sub-personal or nascent *awareness* of *content*, "Thought," in this restricted sense of the term, was there also. An active Alogical Whole,

combining a variety of sub-conscious content; a continuum lying far below such levels as conceptual thinking, with its "dialectic," "categories," and so forth; almost a chaos anteceding cosmos; an arena of warring differences rather than a harmony—this was, perhaps, the mother-stuff in which the centres took their rise. We have spoken of this Ground as active: this activity was, perhaps, not rigidly determined, but showed spontaneity (§ 16).

#### AN "HARMONIOUS SYSTEM OF SELVES" NOT THE BASIC FACT OF THE UNIVERSE

There exists a hypothesis which regards an "harmonious system of selves" as the basic fact of the universe. But such a system does not exist even now. In the first place, all Centres are not "selves"; *e.g.*, the majority of the subhuman Centres are not conscious, or aware of themselves as such. Further, the Centres, I opine, cannot be held to *exhaust* the Ground. In the second place, what harmony there is now in the universe (and history and philosophical pessimism make clear how miserably defective this "harmony" is) seems part of the transformation of the original Ground. The farther back we fare into the past, the more conflict predominates. An "harmonious system" *may* result from the Becoming, but the harmonising of discords and the development of "selves" show no signs of drawing to a close.

Nihilists may listen to our theory of the Ground and murmur—"Perhaps." But they may urge that the Ground was not always; that it arose far back in the night of time, but without antecedents, in a



metaphysical void. It matters not, they will say, at what point the show flashed into being. Again, "perhaps." We are not on a level where doubt of this kind could be stilled. The matter is seemingly not one of practical concern. The Ground, it might be urged, changes continuously now, even if the Nihilists' hypothesis about it should be right. But we must allow that practice is by no means secure. The Ground, if it arose in a metaphysical void, may vanish anon just as inexplicably as it came, leaving "not a rack" of us sentient behind. And with this ominous reminder I must pass on.

#### THE GROUND IS NOT SO REAL AS MY CENTRE

§ 12. The Ground is indefinitely wider than us finites. But, seeing that it is sub-conscious, it is, also, less real. Note here that there obtain degrees of reality even within my Centre. Thus the Centre, before I am properly awake, is less real than it is at noon. And such of its contents as are "attended to" are always *more* real than those which are not; have emerged more fully from the womb of the sub-conscious.

#### THE UNIVERSE IS BECOMING MORE REAL

The Centre, in one respect, is more real than the Ground. Its being is more intense, more or less self-luminous, a star shining in an almost Cimmerian night. Hence with the arising of conscious persons, the universe is becoming more real. Of course, the finite Centre lacks width. It arises in too petty a part of the universe. It holds too little in the form of direct feeling. But, while the *content* side inevitably shows defect, the *consciousness* side marks a notable advance. The march to personality is a distinct

improvement of the universe. At a later stage we shall discuss whether personality, as we know it, is to endure or to be merged in some yet more real phase of becoming.

### IN THE BEGINNING

§ 13. Hegel holds that Reality is eternally complete as the logical Absolute or self-thinking Idea. The purpose of the world is "accomplished no less than ever accomplishing itself." The Absolute, being above time, has no history. Schopenhauer replaces the Idea with Will which is alogical and entirely blind. And this Will certainly has a history (§ 10). It *began*, and will *cease*, to manifest. It was timeless. Then comes the time-process. When its product, conscious intellect, revolts, it is, I suppose, to rebecome timeless. But the timeless state, following on the time one, presents difficulty. Von Hartmann, who seeks, rather superficially, to harmonise the Idea and the Will, supplies a frank history of his "Absolute." His theory of the Beginning serves to throw light on ours; accordingly, I shall give a short account of it ere passing on.

### VON HARTMANN'S THEORY OF THE BEGINNING

All is peace. The Will (alogical) and the Idea (logical) slumber in the Unconscious or Absolute—the Will as potentially active, the Idea as not even this. Then the Will passes from pure potentiality into empty willing. Free to will or not to will, its spontaneity goes no further. Unhappily (for this pessimist view of reality) it wills to will. But, though it furnishes the initiative and sustaining activity, the Will is not adequate to a world-process. The direction of its activity is due to the Idea. Schopenhauer holds

that the sphere of the Idea is *passive* contemplation; while Will shows itself in an active struggling or striving. And von Hartmann in like fashion maintains that "Will and Idea are related to one another as male and female; for the truly feminine never goes beyond an unresisting passive devotion."<sup>1</sup> The "devotion" of the Idea gives place to murderous proclivities anon! It is dragged by the Will into the "whirlpool of being and the torment of the process." But note the resourcefulness of the victim. The "unblessedness" of the loss of its peace must be abolished. Evolution (inorganic (so-called), organic, and conscious) is the stage on which it revolts. It directs the Will in such a way that a world containing highly developed conscious individuals is produced. These individuals, when fully aware of the futility of sentient life, are to conspire to bring the world-process to a close. Apart from this contemplated triumph, conscious being is to be regarded as a limitation and defect. A quaint explanation is given as to how consciousness arose. Prior to consciousness the Idea possesses only unconscious knowledge completely conditioned as to its flow from within. When, however, in connection with organisms, a presentation arises *from without*, the surprise of the Will at a modification not induced by itself—is consciousness. Consciousness is the "stupefaction of the Will at the existence of the Idea not willed, yet sensibly felt by it." This much of the system suffices for our present needs.

#### WILL AND IDEA JUST CONCEPTUAL MONSTERS

The mythological character of this theory leaps to the eye. "Will" and "Idea" are just activity and

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, iii. 169.

content first viewed abstractly, and then hypostatized as "sides" which *come to* interact within the Absolute (*sic*). Empty volition, in fact, is von Hartmann's own phrase, but volition which is empty of content is surely myth. Now "empty volition" is bad enough, but what are we to say of empty willing, which, prior to the fatal act, did not even will? *What* was originally free to will or not to will? Note, again, that the "directing" Idea is impossibly passive. Direction is activity. The charioteer is active, even though he is carried along in the chariot which he directs.

The Will and Idea of von Hartmann are conceptual monsters. Empirical willing shows the aspects activity and content intertwined. The concepts put asunder what come undivided in the primary fact. They are apt to be used as if they stood, not for aspects, but for more or less independent facts. Dub these concepts "sides" of an Absolute, and a metaphysics, such as Comte used to revile, is born.

#### FURTHER DIFFICULTIES

Shall I go on to mutilate the slain? Well, the explanation of consciousness clashes with the view, elsewhere expressed, that the Will never becomes conscious.<sup>1</sup> If, however, the Will never becomes conscious, how do we become aware of it. Next, the "unblessedness" of the Idea prior to consciousness seems preposterous. Pleasure and pain imply *some* degree of awareness. Further, the Idea schemes to evolve consciousness. How can the Idea represent "consciousness" which is not present in unconscious

<sup>1</sup> "The Will itself can never become conscious, because it can never contradict itself." The "because" is good.



knowledge at all? The Idea cannot know what conscious knowledge is like. There can be nothing in its alleged Logical character which compensates for this deplorable defect.

### THE FOLLY AND HELPLESSNESS OF THE "IDEA"

The tormenting Will, I must insist, can only "torment" on the condition that consciousness shall dawn. But, thanks to the folly of the Idea, it dawns! And to this objection I will add yet one more. Suppose that the Idea directs the Will ever so wisely, how is the total world-order to be brought to a close? What of the inevitable recalcitrant human minority and the huge total of animal sentients which, wisely or unwisely, will prefer to be? What of the innumerable other conscious finites, some, perhaps, superhuman, who may exist elsewhere? While a *human* majority may become pessimist, majorities in the Ether or Milky Way may dissent! Let us suppose, however, that majorities everywhere will agree, and that, despite dissent, the Will will be suppressed or led (though an activity!) to suppress itself. Another objectionable world-order might arise later. Von Hartmann has to argue against this view, but, in the face of the terrible Will *free-to-will or not to will*, no forecast can possibly be made. Such spontaneity is not at the mercy of calculations. And now we may profitably pass on.

### AN ALTERNATIVE THEORY OF THE BEGINNING

§ 14. The attempt to discuss the Beginning is daring, not only because the Ground worked in the dark, but, also, because its working is so exceedingly

remote in time. The universe, which at the outset was the Ground, and is now shared by the Ground and such centres as are conscious, is not fixed. Conscious finites react on the Ground whence they spring, while the Ground, apart from their initiative, passes ever into new phases within itself. *We* metaphysicians appear in a changed, probably in a vastly improved, universe. At this stage an important reminder seems timely. Our particular "evolution era," to repeat Spencer's phrase, may have been preceded by evolution and dissolution "eras"—"Days and Nights of Brahma," as a Hindu would say—past counting. And when this thought gives us pause, another of signal suggestiveness arises therewith. A finite god (or gods) evolved in past "eras" may be among the conditions of the "era" that gave *us* birth. We shall have to consider this matter later. But the question of a finite god falls quite outside of the inquiry which concerns us now. I am going back into the night when agencies such as condition present evolution eras and individuals did not exist. I have to ask, Can we form any notion of what took place when the changes ushering in primeval cosmic evolution began?

#### ACTIVITY AND THE GROUND

We can say something, but that something must be general and vague. There was a Ground, alogical and sub-personal, holding a content akin to what we call feeling, a content at once many and one. And this Ground was Active. Its Activity (not a bare one) was its being and in virtue of this it *could* change. But change and time, as we shall see, were not native to its being. "Activity," I am aware, raises difficulties.

Bradley urges that it implies succession in time, but this contention is far from secure. Activity seems ultimate. It has, perhaps, two phases, one of which we may call Spontaneity and the other, which is derived and does undoubtedly imply time, Causal Activity. It will be remembered that there are no *separate* "causes" and "effects"—save for conceiving—but there obtains, withal, a dynamic in which change is positively enforced (Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 11, 12, 13, 14). This secondary dynamic may have *begun* in a way to be discussed presently.

#### THE ONE AND THE MANY

The content implicated with Activity in the Ground is varied. It contains differences. And this variety is primary. At any rate, it is not the output or expression of "Thought." Do you urge with Hegel that "*the notion . . . teaches that the one forms the presupposition of the Many; and in the thought of the One is implied also that it explicitly makes itself Many . . . the One . . . means an exclusion of self and so making itself into Many?*" Now, Hegel is discussing the articulation of "Thought" in the IDEA. I know something as to what this "Thought"-unity in its "eternal essence" really is. It is—Hegel's. But I know nothing of a "Thought"-unity which supports the cosmos, Hegel, and me. The notion or concept of the One is formed during my history. I will admit at once that it implies a Many. It is not, however, the concept which passes into, and *makes*, the Many. There is *awareness* of a many which is not posited by "Thought"; and there is further awareness that this many is continuous and, also, one. *The concept follows the awareness of alogical fact.* Thus no concept of

unity is big with the 30,000 shades of colour which the Roman mosaics present. But having felt the colours and their continuity—why, *then*, I can form a concept and use it subsequently as seemeth me good. I have to recall, however, that the concept is a conjurer's hat, and that nothing will come out of it which has not been slipped in first. The Dialectical deduction of the many is a conjuring feat hardly meet to deceive the performer himself.

#### THE "NOTION" BELONGS TO THE NOVELTY BORN IN FINITE CENTRES

The Alogical Ground, as we have urged, is *below* mind. It is prior to the "notion." The latter grasps in a new form moments which come to, and are not posited by, it. It is a novelty which only the history of a conscious individual can contain. It is a dead thing, a substitute-fact, having no power to evolute into further fact. Once formed, it "teaches" something, no doubt. It indicates, and so makes men feel, reality which it does not produce.

#### RELATIVITY AND PRIMARY DIFFERENCES

The Variety, then, is not the Expression of "Thought." What, however, of the relativity which we have so often discussed? If all *known* differences are relative to other differences, what of qualities as they lie in the primeval Ground? The subjoined passage bearing on relativity is taken from Hegel:—

"On the one side the limit makes the reality of a thing; on the other it is its negation. But, again, the limit, as the negation of something, is not an



abstract nothing, but a nothing which is—what we call an other. *Given something and up starts another to us. . . .* Nor, again, is the other of such a nature that we can think something apart from it; a something is implicitly the other of itself, and the somewhat sees its limit become objective to it in the other. If we now ask the difference between something and another, *it appears that they are the same.*"<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is argued that one can never rest in this or that difference at all. Each "something" hurries thought to an "other"; the "other" refers it to "others," and so on. In the end, known qualities may seem to pass into "relations": a consummation which, for certain idealists, is devoutly to be wished. Is it urged that the primordial qualities in our Ground vanish similarly into "relations," if we allow thought to do its work?

But to discuss "relations," if there obtains nothing relatable, is absurd. And now, as before, we have to appeal from concept-juggling to sentient experience. I believe in relativity only because sentient experience forces it on my view. "Given something," as Hegel says, "and up starts another to us." So far, so good. This is sound, solid experience. But this experienced cosmos of relativity is unlike the Ground whence it probably arose. And it seems arguable that primordial differences, while phases of this Ground, and, to this extent, one, may not have been so mutually invasive as now. The "irrelative" quality may not exist now, but, peradventure, something of the kind existed once.

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. 148.

## RELATIVITY, AS WE KNOW IT, IMPLIES DIFFERENCE-CORES

"Somethings" which appear in my sentient experience show relativity. A is what it is in part in virtue of what it is not. Quite so. But "in part" is important. Differences must come to relativity. If A, B, C, etc., were points of mere indeterminateness or emptiness, they could not enter into, and, so far, constitute, one another. A has, at least, a passing core of content not given by, but struggling against, content from without. The trouble is that *we* do not get it pure and undefiled. Bearing in mind, then, that relativity presupposes differences, let us ask how such differences may have stood to one another in the primeval Ground. In doing so we shall take up the question of Activity once more, and shall seek, among other things, to surmise in what way came to pass an era of Change, of Space, and of Time.

WAS THERE A BEGINNING?—THREE MORE OR LESS  
 LIKELY HYPOTHESES—HAS THE UNIVERSE A  
 HISTORY?—ABSOLUTIST PROTEST.

§ 15. But before we take the plunge, let us take note of an objection as yet ignored. Was there a Beginning? Well, it may be that the story of the universe has no first chapter. We are to observe that there are at least three more or less likely hypotheses in the field. (1) Events or changes may never have begun. Eras, with sub-eras, of cosmic evolution and dissolution, may have been happening always, with never a break. (2) "Days" without number of cosmic *change* may have been divided by

"nights" of *changeless* peace. (3) There was once a *first* "night" followed by a first "day." Those who accept No. (1) will have no use for the speculative matter to follow. Those who prefer No. (2) or (3) will be curious to see how we account for the Beginning of a change-period after "night." They should be in earnest with the idea that the Ground, which was once the entire Universe, has a history. There are critics, of course, who resent a history of the universe. Thus Bradley considers it unmeaning and even "blasphemous" to suppose that the universe has been changed and improved. But appearances, if they reveal anything, support this history. On the other hand, the Absolute, "complete, perfect, and finished" leads a precarious existence within philosophers' heads. It has no empirical standing. We reject it on the lines laid down by our theory of truth (Part II. Chap. II. § 15). It is a "substitute-fact"—concepts are also facts!—which agrees with nothing, relevant to our purpose, which experience displays.

### A WORKING HYPOTHESIS

It is possible that hypothesis No. (1) is correct. No human thinker is in a position to say that it is not. But, of course, I can work on the assumption that events had a beginning. This, in fact, is what I propose to do. And I shall make the experiment of entertaining hypothesis No. (2).<sup>1</sup> The supposal No. (3), that sheer undisturbed changeless-

<sup>1</sup> Nature seems a witness for alternation even amid her changes. "Throughout all her regions she oscillates from tension to *vis viva*, from *vis viva* to tension" (Tyndall on the "Constitution of Nature"). The echo is faint, but suggestive.

ness gave place to alternations of change and changelessness, arouses distrust. If a psychical activity is ultimate, its nature is to *disturb* as well as to *conserve*. This utterance, which is of moment, will prove less cryptic and more acceptable as we proceed.

#### HOW THE BEGINNING CAME TO PASS

§ 16. We are discussing the Beginning of a hypothetical "day" of Change. What, then, are the basic conditions of this dawn? Let us suppose that as yet conscious individuals have never been evolved. The Ground holds just a variety, or many-hued content akin to what we call feeling; this being the *static result* of the development of the preceding "day." Let us suppose, further, that this variety is not in the form of space. How are we to get Change, Time, and Space out of this static variety-in-unity which seems devoid of an inner principle of movement, and hence incapable of passing into a novel form? <sup>1</sup>

#### ACTIVITY AS CONSERVING

Hegel supposes that contradiction, "above all things, is what moves the world." But we can appeal to no such dynamic, inasmuch as we reject the view that conceptual "Thought" is *prius*. "Contradiction" for us is a form of struggle such as may obtain between *propositions*. Struggle, as pervading Nature and conscious life, is an enormously wider affair than this. And struggle itself is secondary, a characteristic of the "Day" which is about to dawn.

<sup>1</sup> The question as to whether this variety was merely chaos or a "germinal system" is discussed in Part III. Chap. VI.



THE GROUND EXPRESSES IN ITS SELF-MAINTENANCE  
AN ACT—THIS CONSERVATIVE SIDE OF ACTIVITY  
IS ALSO EXPRESSED LATER IN BOTH NATURE AND  
FREE WILL.

We have to suppose something basic which supports, and takes form in, all else, and is not itself to be explained further. Our supposal is an alogical psychical activity, not bare, but one with the content-variety which it HOLDS IN BEING. The Ground is not a *dead* Whole, a many-hued precipitate which *merely* is. A dead Ground is—a dead Ground: no promise or potency of becoming lies therein. *It and its variety* (the many-hued differences which any view of relativity has to assume: cf. § 14, "The One and the Many") *express in their self-maintenance or conservation an act.* This conservative Activity simply upholds content *against change.* It is to find expression later in Nature and Mind in what we discuss as "laws," "uniformities," "habits," "dispositions," "order," and so forth, and even in the essential act that characterises "Free Will." The latter need no longer be taken over in the brutal way in which we regarded it before (Part II. Chap. VI. § 8). Freedom in us is the ectype of that activity which upholds the Ground. It will be objected that striving makes for change; the alteration rather than the preservation of my passing states being secured. Of course I can strive to maintain a pleasant state, but in a world of change I have usually, no doubt, some ideal alteration in view. The point, however, to which I am drawing attention is the mode in which not mere striving, but *free* striving works. The essential fact in free striving is the *holding in consciousness* of the "idea" which I mean to prevail (§ 8,

*ibid.*). Freedom, to this extent, whatever be its final result, implies the maintaining of the given "idea" against all else, and is realised by means of a fundamentally *conserving* act.

THE ACTIVITY WHICH CONSERVES BECOMES THAT WHICH DISTURBS — CHANGE, TIME - SUCCESSION, AND SPACE RESULT FROM STRUGGLE.

Conceive this activity, then, as simply maintaining the differences in the Ground. The differences, while changelessly upheld, are not present obtrusively, if at all, in one another. Hence there obtains an "irrelative" variety: irrelative save for its lying in a whole; a variety-in-unity, a Many-in-the-One — (with the emphasis on the Many)—rather than a unity-in-variety, or One-in-the-Many. And this primary togetherness in the Ground is just being without inner movement. There obtains no individual conscious Centre in which it is felt, and, again, there is no flux over against which it could be felt to endure. Time-succession, which implies changing content, is unborn.

Now the Activity which conserves becomes, also, the Activity which disturbs or destroys this changeless state. The *degree* of activity is not fixed. To this extent (like its ectype in *free* human striving) it is an unpredictable factor, an undetermined condition, whence the appulse to cosmic struggle proceeds. Its SPONTANEOUS HEIGHTENING is the fundamental change on which all other changes ensue.

Conceive the Activity heightened. All primary differences are heightened with it. The differences at

first affirmed severally, and without mutual prejudice, come to affect, and overflow into, one another. Each insists on, and expands, itself; but, since they are all equally in the Ground, they conflict or collide. Each difference, as it were, aspires to occupy the Ground, but, in striving to dominate, it meets others. The differences encroach on one another's being, and collapse, so far as they encroach, into novel results. A universal changing sets in; self-conservation, and that with least loss of quality, perpetuating unrest. (1) *On the one hand*, the struggle makes for greater unity, seeing that RELATIVITY has become pronounced. The original differences of the Many or variety have become obscured. Henceforth Each is what it is partly in virtue of *others* which penetrate its being. There is not a single aspect of the Ground which has not to suffer the invasive activity of the other aspects. And the interaction and the modification enforced thereby are an advance. The undeveloped Ground may be likened to a town whose inhabitants are asleep. They are all within its limits, but, for the while, they are nothing to one another. In the morning they awake and meet in complex relations; the town is a richer and more living unity than it was before. (2) *On the other hand*, the struggle feeds diversity, and gives rise to time-succession and space. These latter are not "principles of individuation," as certain lovers of abstraction have seen fit to call them. They do not go down so deep as, are not primary like, the variety (Part II. Chap. IV. § 9). Still, time and space are not forms thrust upon the variety. Contrariwise, the variety, owing to the conflict, the mutual repulsion of its phases, *passes into* the novel modes of being which we call time and space, or, better, succession and co-existence,

But at this stage I scent a difficulty which must be laid at once.

“SIMULTANEITY,” SUCCESSION, AND SPACE

We are discussing no mere forms of perception, human or animal, such as concerned Kant, but primitive time and space as forms of that “continuous basis of Nature” which *preceded* all conscious life. And in respect of time there is a difficulty. It is too customary to identify time with “succession,” and to forget that “simultaneity” has to be considered as well. Now, let me say explicitly that I am treating “simultaneity” as primary. We cannot get behind the togetherness of differences in the Ground. But what we can do is to derive succession and co-existence in the way suggested above. Even co-existence presents no insoluble riddle. It is a modified simultaneity: a form into which simultaneous existence is forced. Space was once defined as the abstraction of the “alongsidedness” of indifferent things. But the “things” are not indifferent. Phases of the Ground *conflict* so that they can no longer exist simultaneously. They modify one another, but they are also self-conserving and decline to fuse wholly in a single result. This novel relation is expressed as externality to one another—as co-existence or space. Space, in fine, is derived and *shows diversity in a novel form*: the result of struggle aroused by free activity in the Ground. But Simultaneity, or mere togetherness in time, is primary. It is nothing mysterious withal. The primeval Ground being a variety-in-unity, the phases are simultaneously there. Simultaneity is an aspect of the fact that the Ground is not blank unity, but holds differences.



It is a primary manner of the being or appearing of the differences.

### MOVEMENT

Movement presupposes time-succession and space. There is change of place in the Ground; the differences or variety-phases are thwarted and furthered in various degrees and betray, accordingly, a ceaseless unrest. I have mentioned "furthering." We can suppose, on the witness of appearances, that there are like or agreeing, as well as unlike or conflicting, phases in the Ground. A phase struggles not only *away from* hostile phases, but also *toward* favourable or furthering ones. And we are not using the language of metaphor. Space has been evolved; and movement, while not barely mechanical, becomes a fact.<sup>1</sup> Hence we can speak of "attractions" and "repulsions" as indicative of what really goes on. Phase A will attract and be attracted by B, C, D, which favour its self-conservation or expansion, and it will be repelled by E and F, which invade and thwart it. We can speak, also, of a *contiguous* phase as more potent to further and thwart than one which is *remote*. This subject, however, has been dealt with already (Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 6, 7, 8, etc.), when we were dealing with the

<sup>1</sup> Let no reader shy at "Movement." The materialists' Mechanical movements are just novelties of the conceptual world (Part II. Chap. III. § 5). Such inventions belong to the history of human thinking. They exist, not in the Ground, but in the heads of writers on Mechanics. Movements proper present no difficulty. Thus they appear in the content of my own Centre! The moving stone which I perceive and the moving automobile which I picture in fancy alike change their place. My experience, of course, contains much more than movements. But the fact that it contains them includes the fact that they are nothing "non-psychical" and *foreign* to it.

"minor centres." Such minor centres may comprise numberless variety-phases, and do not obtain, perhaps, in the primitively developed Ground. But the observations made as to their "attractions" and "repulsions" are applicable in the main here.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF NATURE ARE LAID — UNIFORMITY AND NOVELTY—WHAT THE "CONTINUOUS BASIS OF NATURE" REALLY IS.

§ 17. The Ground is thus essentially "self-contradictory." It is ever becoming what it is not. It has begun to change; it has passed into time, space, and movement; it has originated that secondary process which came under notice when "Causality and Natural Process" (Part II. Chap. IV. § 11) was discussed. Happenings come to pass as the dynamic of the self-conserving variety-phases dictates. Approximately alike phases or "conditions," in coming together, will issue in, or constitute, approximately, alike results. This is the red strand of "uniformity" due to self-conservation. On the other hand, fresh reality emerges as phases, not yet intimately contiguous, come to meet. Hence Nature, the foundations of which have been laid, is progressively novel. As we observed before, there was once a fire-mist and now there are green fields!

We see clearly now for what our old phrase, "the continuous basis of Nature," really stands. It refers us to the development within the Ground. *This* Nature is not dependent on a conscious "knower." Its *esse* is not presence to us and like finite centres. Its history began when conscious centres were not. It is a far cry from the origin of change to the rise of

conscious individuals and of the multiple fragmentary "shadow-natures" (Part II. Chap. IV. § 16) which appear in them.

### THE PRIMEVAL GROUND IS DEVOID OF "ENDS" OR PURPOSE

§ 18. We have spoken of the primeval Ground as sub-conscious. We cannot, accordingly, suppose that it has "ends" or *a* purpose. There could be no unrealised end tormenting the changeless state. And the beginnings of change are on a level so low that nothing akin to conscious purposiveness can obtain. It seems best to regard "ends" as novelties developed relatively late in cosmic story: novelties which presuppose *conscious* centres, animal, human, and other, as their seats. The Ground is alogical and below personality. It must not be characterised in terms which anticipate later developments *into which* it will pass.

We have now said enough respecting the primeval Ground. We have been concerned with a retrospect. To theists this latter will seem forbidding, for in truth god, viewed as fount and origin of reality, has disappeared. A prospect, however, and assuredly a most remarkable one, awaits us. Reality is not fixed, but fluid. It shows promise of a consummation, of a "far-off divine event" in which an ideal immeasurably more sublime than any cherished by the popular theistic creeds will be realised.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF NATURE

#### THE NOVEL IN NATURE—ORIGIN OF THE MINOR CENTRES

§ 1. THE Ground, then, which is “self-contradictory,”<sup>1</sup> transforms itself from changeless existence, with its simultaneous variety, having like and unlike, agreeing and disagreeing, phases, into ordered successions, co-existences, and movements of attraction and repulsion big with possibilities of novelty — in a word, into the protean process of Nature.<sup>2</sup> Nature is a continuous creation; it is not only remade from moment to moment, but its history will teem with incessantly *novel* fact. The variety-phases, in coming together, collapse, in part, into fresh results. These results, again, meet other fresh results, and there is no end, accordingly, to the novelties of change. Sooner or later, also, there are born *attraction-complexes*, clusterings of phases which are mutually furthering and which conserve themselves as relative, if changeful, wholes in the Ground. Again, these fresh nuclei of activity will further, and be furthered

<sup>1</sup> Part III. Chap. I. § 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Part III. Chap. I. § 17, and Part II. Chap. IV. § 17. This is not one of the fragmentary “shadow” Natures which I or you, or Brown, perceives.



by, thwart, or be thwarted by, other nuclei. There will arise yet more important relative wholes. Attraction-complexes comprising subordinate complexes will come to exist. The Minor Centres *symbolised* in speculative chemistry and Physics will appear. "Inorganic" evolution, astronomic, geologic, etc., will have begun.

### THE GROUND HAS NO PURPOSE—STRIFE THE FATHER OF COSMOS

§ 2. The Ground at the outset of inorganic evolution is sub-conscious and without purpose. Further, as we agreed, it is a variety-in-unity rather than a unity-in-variety. Unity proper, a unity overriding and truly subordinating included variety, implies consciousness. The predominant side in the Ground is variety. The simile of the Giant and the pygmies (Part II. Chap. VI. § 6) might, with certain alterations, be introduced here. Nature, as its swarming evils and imperfections suggest, is born from a struggle in the dark.

Nevertheless, this wild struggle is such that it *becomes* what it was not—cosmos.<sup>1</sup> The self-conserving variety-phases, and anon the self-conserving Minor Centres, are not irrelative entities, but have to meet. The Ground includes, while it does not fully subordinate, them. They invade and penetrate (Part II. Chap. IV. § 7) one another, and, in so doing, collapse into altered fact. Two phases which interpenetrate and, to that extent, annul their co-existence or spatial separateness, have to fuse. They pass into a novelty which is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap. VI. for some further remarks on "design" and "order." There is no call to suppose that utter disorder, or mere chaos, is primeval.

compact of the content-activities of both. And no phase or minor centre (which includes phases) can avoid being invaded in this way. It conserves itself, withal, as well as the conditions allow. It moves in the line of least resistance, repulsion, or thwarting, in that of greatest attraction or furthering; or, normally, perhaps, in that of least thwarting *and* greatest furthering. It and its allies, in the *act* of maintaining themselves, coalesce as complexes, of which, however, only the "fittest" will persist. Again, two like attraction-complexes meeting two other like complexes will, in virtue of self-conservation, behave in like ways. Thus alogical struggle makes for *concentration*, for *order*, for novel "*variations*," and for the *elimination of the unfit*. The Ground passes ever on to improved levels of Becoming. It changes *as if* it followed some purpose or was guided by instinct. But we are not to overrate the character of the cosmos to which it gives rise. The story of conscious life is a grim one—universal history what Winwood Reade called it, "the martyrdom of man." The defects and positive evils in the world are legion. I shall have more to say about this matter anon. For the present I note that Pessimism, which has many adherents in philosophy, is one of the most widespread of the beliefs which appeal to the plain man.

### EVOLUTION INCLUDES CONCENTRATION

§ 3. I have spoken of the origin of minor *centres* and more generally of *concentration*. I should add that the stages of "inorganic" and, indeed, organic development are increasingly *concentrative*. The lowest "sub-chemical" attraction-complex or minor centre prepares the way for systems of such complexes,

and these, again, for systems of systems, and so on. In the mechanical Monism of Spencer this truth is discussed by one who grasps it in symbols and from the outside. Thus:—

“Alike during the evolution of a solar system, of a planet, of an organism, of a nation, there is progressive aggregation of the entire mass. This may be shown by the increasing density of the matter already contained in it; or by the drawing into it of matter that was before separate, or by both . . . at the same time the parts into which the mass had divided severally consolidate in like manner . . . Always more or less of local integration accompanies the general integration.”<sup>1</sup>

The process is not, however, mechanical, but what, for want of a better word, may be called psychical. Thus “inorganic” evolution is not the coming together or integration of “material” facts, with “concomitant dissipation” of a detachable sort of entity called “motion.” It begins with the coming together of mutually furthering (attracting) phases in a psychical Ground: phases which in the first stage of co-existence were apart. Its upshot is the concentration, the intensifying by furtherance, of the psychical life native to this Ground. This same psychical life as brought to intensity in connection with organisms, or rather advanced organisms, is—consciousness.

#### PROPERLY SPEAKING, THERE IS NO INORGANIC EVOLUTION

But the term “organism” is not, as we saw, to be restricted to those complexes with which biology

<sup>1</sup> Spencer, *First Principles*, p. 327.

deals. And, properly speaking, there are no stages of "inorganic" evolution. The minor centres, which support this evolution, are relative wholes which maintain themselves in a struggle for existence and must be considered to *live* (Part II. Chap. IV. § 15). They are *foci* of psychical activity and in ceaseless unrest. Of course, we have done with the view that Nature is built of units which are unalterable, their combinations alone being subject to change. This is just a form of the *Fallacy of Simplicity* (Part II. Chap. III. § 5), and is utterly absurd. Nature is not simple. It can be treated as simple for the sake of convenience, but not when we require truth. Recent scientific symbolism about the "sub-mechanics" of the cosmos is unconsciously approximating toward the view which is advanced in this work (p. 116).

#### SPENCER'S THEORY OF CAUSATION AND "FORCE"

§ 4. I have cited an important generalisation of Spencer's: let us glance in passing at his way of regarding the causation which brought about concentration. Well, he holds that Causation is reducible to the uniformity of the quantitative and qualitative relations obtaining between modes of "Force" and their equivalents when transformed. An instance in point is Joule's discovery that the falling of 772 pounds one foot will always heat a pound of water one degree Fahrenheit. The saying, "the falling of this weight is the *cause* of the raised temperature," refers us to an underlying persistence of a relation between two modes of force.<sup>1</sup> What, however, of "Force"? Alas!

<sup>1</sup> In inventing his symbolism, Spencer seems to have thought only of Nature. But psychology, also, has its uniformities of causation. The I may urge that conditions A, B, C, etc., are the



the promised cup of knowledge is dashed from our lips. We are bluntly informed that Force in itself is an ultimate entirely unknown.

The reply to this is that "Force" is entirely known (Part II. Chap. III. § 5): is a novelty which exists naked and unashamed in my conceptual world. As to causation, we need not repeat hypotheses which we have already discussed (Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 12, 13, 14). The root of the matter lies in the dynamic of the *self-conserving phases and centres*. Content-activities approximately alike in quantity and quality will, in coming together, issue in, or constitute, approximately alike results; whence uniformity in Nature.

WE MUST ALLOW FOR THE PROBABLE EXISTENCE OF  
"OTHER WORLDS THAN OURS," ALSO, OF INDIVIDUALS, SOME, IT MAY BE, SUPERIOR, OTHERS  
INFERIOR, TO THE HUMAN AND ANIMAL SENTIENTS  
OF WHICH WE KNOW.

§ 5. The Ground has passed into minor centres or attraction-complexes, "sub-chemical," "chemical," etc., and into systems of these—into the cosmos which, as known mediately in our shadow-percepts, concentrates as nebulae, suns, planets, organisms, and so forth. I have our familiar astronomical order in view. But take note that this order may form no very important division of Nature. Despite its millions of suns, it may show poor amid the wealth of natural process cause of our adult perceptions of space. It would surely be absurd to say that *this* uniformity refers us to persistent relations between modes of "force." The psychological processes *must* be discussed from the inside. This wretched mechanical symbolism of "force" is not wanted, seeing that here the concrete content-processes are in full view.

which exists. It is probable, to say the least of it, that there are innumerable "other worlds than ours." Further, in connection with these worlds there may have arisen countless sorts of sentient, some below, others, again, far above, the level of development attained by men. It would be folly to *assume* that men who show few excellences, and are laden, for the most part, with defects, are the most important facts yet reached in the Becoming.

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF NATURE IS NO  
LONGER OBSCURE.

§ 6. The several aspects of Nature-philosophy cannot be discussed within the limits of this essay. And adequate treatment of them would entail a task for which I, for one, am not sufficiently equipped. Still, both here and in Part II., the major difficulties of the problem have been faced. We do not require to rethink science in detail. In view of the end of our thinking, we have said, in fact, quite enough. Metaphysics, as understood here, = propositions which indicate the *general character* of reality. And the general character of that mode of reality called Nature is no longer obscure. Psychical throughout, it arises within the sub-conscious Ground, changing with ceaseless creation of novelty till it passes into the organisms which confront us now. Nature is no inert "force"-swayed precipitate, but a live phase in the transformation of the Ground. In connection with certain of its organisms there arises the marvel of conscious life. A new starting-point for development is given therewith. The significance and direction of this development will be discussed in the ensuing chapters.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EVOLUTION OF INDIVIDUALS

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONSCIOUS SPIRIT

§ 1. THE Ground, incessating in centres, passes into Nature. And Nature, still concentrative, passes in the more complex organisms, or rather in limited portions of these, into conscious life. We are, of course, specially interested in the origin and standing of animal and human individuals. But we must recall the likelihood that there are vast tracts of Nature which escape our knowledge, and hence that the rise of known individuals may be a minor affair after all. In view of this probability, it is, at least, hazardous to speculate on "Absolutes" which are self-revealed in the thought of sentient beings such as we. Human experiences may be unimportant both numerically and in respect of their attainments. Still, even confining our view to sentient beings as we know them or of them, we have a formidable development in view. The philosophy of conscious spirit is an enormous subject, the branches of which call for more treatises than there are sections at our disposal here. Happily, our metaphysics is pursuing a restricted end. We are not to discuss in detail the rise and growth of animal and human individuals, the development of societies, rights, laws, morality,

religion, art, the sciences, and so forth; to retrace minutely how the "World-Mind" uncloses itself in history. Sufficient for the present is the modest aim with which we set out. We wish to know what the *general character* of conscious reality has been and will be. Those who descry this character can remedy the abstractness of metaphysics anon. The great gaps in their knowledge can be filled at leisure. There is required a commanding point of view whence the many aspects of conscious experience shall be resurveyed and studied synoptically in a new light.

#### THE "FACTS" OF NATURE

§ 2. The "facts" of Nature consist of content-activities psychical throughout and showing, perhaps, at times foregleams of sentient life (Part II. Chap. IV. § 4). The content is sub-conscious, but akin to feeling. And there is no content which is not active, and no activity which is not of content. To be is to be active, or embody activity, even when change is not implied (Part III. Chap. I. § 16). Content and activity are sometimes viewed abstractly and referred to distinct relative wholes (united, conceptually, in an Absolute), in which case arise monsters such as von Hartmann's "IDEA" (inactive) and "WILL" (active). A fallacy of abstraction is indicated, aspects being treated as manifestations of separate wholes. And, again, the names "Idea" and "Will" are misleading. There is description of sub-conscious and relatively undeveloped being in terms expressive of conscious and relatively developed life. I am repeating an old criticism (Part III. Chap. I. § 13) as relevant to what is to follow.



## THE "FACTS" DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH CONSCIOUS LIFE—THE INSULATION OF THE CONSCIOUS CENTRE.

§ 3. Certain content-activities of those portions of Nature called brains form the basis of conscious life. And the conscious Centre is insulated from other like centres by the sub-conscious. Were Nature entirely conscious, the separate individual would not exist. Consciousness arises in places where the concentrative process of Nature is complete, where the activities of "attraction-complexes" conspire to produce specially intense psychical life.<sup>1</sup> The being of Nature, which is already psychical, is livened or heightened into a superior psychical form. The resulting Centre has direct knowledge only of appearances within its limits. A portion of Nature has come to exist for itself, to shine in its own light, and the price of promotion is a peculiar isolation. The contents of the Centre are still continuous with the residual universe. But the Centre is aware of these contents in a solitude into which like conscious centres never intrude. A novel starting-point for development has been reached.

THE LIFE OF THE CENTRE IS NOT DETERMINED  
SOLELY BY THE BODY WHEREIN IT BEGINS

§ 4. The rise of the individual has been sufficiently discussed elsewhere. The Centre *begins* as an illuminated fragment of the organic life. It is a slave in the service of the body. But we must add that it *develops* also for itself and on novel lines. A

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part II. Chap. V. § 2, "The Conditions of Consciousness," and elsewhere, Part III. Chap. II. § 3 more especially.

physiologist may regard conscious processes as "phenomena which interpose between the afferent and efferent currents of the reflex action." This is a convenient way of writing, when simplicity, rather than depth, is desired. Why should we reckon of subtle metaphysics? It seems a master-stroke to assert a simple continuity of events within a body! Still, the metaphysician must ask what is meant by body? And he must urge that this alleged "continuity" of *conscious* process and body-process gives us pause. "Continuity?" Yes, the contents of the Centre are continuous with content beyond its domain. Nevertheless, a new empire—a veritable *imperium in imperio*—has appeared. Even the animal sentient exists for itself as well as for the body. It has its private and peculiar ends, the pursuit of which often conflicts with the well-being of the body. And in the case of the human sentient, the new empire shows very plain. The Centre in its solitude acts as a "novel might." The Giant awakes and takes stock of his possessions. Developments ensue for which no "physical basis of consciousness"—*whether physical be interpreted on the lines of idealism or not*—can account. Conscious life is not determined solely from the sub-conscious (Part II. Chap. VI. §§ 6, 7, and 8). The Centre is a relative whole which pursues ends impossibly present to anything *below*, or *less wide* than, itself. And in realising these ends it works changes in those minor relative wholes, or minor centres, which it includes—works changes in what we call the brain. Grasping this truth, we may say with Wundt that "it is not the subjective [Centre's]<sup>1</sup> life which is the outcome of the physical structure; it is rather the physical structure which in all those

<sup>1</sup> These brackets, of course, are mine.

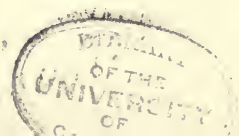
purposive adjustments distinguishing it from organic compounds is itself a subjective [the Centre's]<sup>1</sup> product." Note that we have shown how to dispense with dualism in carrying this explanation through.

The development of the Centre goes beyond the conditions wherein it arose. It shows features which a body could neither furnish nor require. Take, for instance, the cult of knowledge. I desire, *e.g.*, to know all about "categories." This kind of thinking does not exist for the sake of "doing," such as subserves body: it exists primarily for the *life of the Centre*. This Centre is not the *inert* "by-product," the dead precipitate, which materialism conceives it to be. The Ground has changed into Nature and body; body, again, has changed into the superior fact—conscious life. The Centre, in fine, is a conscious form of the activity of the Ground—a novelty which is a live point of departure for further growth. We have found, indeed, that it is not only active, but, in certain circumstances, is active freely as well (Part II. Chap. VI. § 8).

#### ON NOVELTY, DEVELOPMENT, AND PROGRESS

§ 5. We have dwelt on novelty, "change," "transformation," etc., in discussing the Ground, Nature, and individuals. And we are committed to the theory that reality has been bettered and improved. But there are thinkers who regard reality as perfect, complete, and finished, as containing, indeed, histories, but as not being a history itself. "Nothing genuinely real can move," observes Bradley—the Absolute, which is alone real, displays neither progress nor decay. Those who espouse this hypothesis must flout

<sup>1</sup> These brackets, of course, are mine.



experience and make appeal to a conceptual "Back o' Beyont."

#### A CHANGELESS ABSOLUTE IS NOT EXPERIENCED BY US

Empiricism gives the Absolute very short shrift. The Absolute is a "substitute-fact" (concepts are facts as good as any others) with which sentient reality does not agree. It is a concept, then, which is erroneous (Part I. Chap. II. §§ 15 and 19), but its usefulness, withal, is not to be gainsaid. It serves as a foil over against which the truth shows in bold relief. It stimulates controversy, which enriches the sphere of mind. The universe would be poorer had this kind of concept not appeared.

#### AND THE FORMULA OF CONTRADICTION CANNOT COMPENSATE FOR OUR LACK OF EXPERIENCE

Sentient reality, as we have it, does not show the Absolute. Why, then, should we believe in it? The reply is not far to seek. It is contended that change implies contradiction, and that the contradictory cannot stand. The Real cannot be contradictory: this is the formula or maxim of contradiction as it steps out of logic into metaphysics. We have retorted by urging that logic (one of our "many inventions") is the science of propositions in so far as these latter subserve the end of inferring truth. The formula of contradiction is useful in helping us to use these propositions with satisfactory results. It is misused when it is applied to the *matter* of metaphysics, when it is held to sap sentient experience, of whose character we have just to take note (Part II. Chap. I., "Appearances and Contradiction").



Our criticism, in fine, amounts to this. We are not *directly* aware of this Absolute. And (the formula failing) we have no means of getting at it *indirectly* in thinking. We cannot accept it on the lines of Faith. And so—we pass on.

FROM A SENTIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL POINT OF  
VIEW, IT IS WELL THAT REALITY CAN CHANGE

Incidentally, however, I note that Bradley has characterised the belief that reality can be improved as “blasphemous.” Adjectives of this sort make no appeal to us. But observe that an Absolute such as his is in this fix. It has to contain all that was, is, and ever shall be, not a jot or tittle of sentient experience being lost. It must include History, which Hegel describes as “the Calvary of the Absolute Spirit”! It hugs to itself the agonies of a Chinese *Jardin des Supplices*, the miseries of the destitute and diseased, the squalid and beastly side of organic life as we know it, the grim swarms of intolerable errors, the hosts of personalities who are offensive even to themselves. Do you urge that it holds these sorts of content “transformed”? If so, the Absolute does not hold human and animal sentient experience, but something else! If, on the other hand, the Absolute holds all these sorts of content just as they are, then the sooner the Absolute is improved, and that very radically, the better!<sup>1</sup>

IT IS WELL THAT REALITY CHANGES!

We have no reason to regret that reality changes. The Ground, we may say, throws up anything. Very

<sup>1</sup> Of course, these considerations apply equally forcibly to the Advaita Vedantism of Brahmanical philosophy, modern “theosophical” Absolutes, and the like.

much that appears is positively evil. Its fate, however, is to change into something else, scavenging the universe in the process. It is well that so much of the past exists no longer even in idea. It is well, too, that reality is plastic to the efforts of striving centres such as we. An Absolute of frozen reality would appal. The refrigerator could not improve stinking fish. The issue, of course, must be decided by the evidence. Still, from a sentimental and practical point of view, reality, which is self-scavenging and which lends itself to being bettered by human effort, is infinitely more satisfactory.

#### NOVELTY AND CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUALS

§ 6. Reality, then, as we conceive it, flows. And the activity of the Ground is not informed by an "idea" which just expresses itself, and becomes concrete, in what becomes. The Ground is no Hegelian Spirit which merely brings to its consciousness explicitly what it is implicitly or in itself. It is no huckster who shifts his wares from the backyard into the shop-window; no glove which, on being turned inside out, shows what it always was. The "actual," as we confront it, is not the "potential" somehow pushed into the light. It is born from conditions, *many of which have originated in the process of Becoming itself*. The Ground itself, as it pre-existed to Nature, was, perhaps, the static result of a prior becoming or "Day" of change (Part III. Chap. I. §§ 15, 16). It passes into Nature, wherein novelties are without number. The novel conditions supervening in Nature prepare the way for animal and human centres. With the rise, again, of these centres novelties innumerable come into being. The

Philosophy of conscious Spirit is a continuous display of the features which these novelties show. And one of the most interesting of metaphysical inquiries concerns a "far-off divine event," a supreme novelty, towards which all the minor novel developments characteristic of conscious individuals seem to move.

MORALITY AS NOVELTY—ITS "POTENTIAL"  
EXISTENCE IN THE GROUND NONSENSE

§ 7. Morality, for instance, is novelty which begins after conscious centres have been evolved. It is idle to say that it was "potential" in the heart of things, in the primeval Ground or in Nature. This can only mean that *a few* of the conditions requisite to its becoming pre-existed to the rise of conscious centres. Other conditions presupposed by the novelty did not. A "potential" existence of this kind "exists" only by philosophical licence. It is a courtesy-fact, and, when truth is in question, must be treated as such.

SYMPATHY

§ 8. Take *Sympathy*, on which Schopenhauer bases, but perhaps erroneously, all right conduct of the reflective sort. It is assuredly of no archaic standing. The Ground as a whole was not sympathetic, seeing that (1) it was not conscious, and (2) even had it been conscious, there was no form of being outside it. It was a variety-in-unity, below the level of personality. Its phases, as we saw, came to struggle. Nevertheless, there was *furthering*, as well as thwarting, present in this struggle. Phase A furthered, and was furthered by, phase B, and what we have called the "attraction-complex" was the result. This furthering may seem

the germ, the "virtuality" or "potentiality" out of which conscious sympathetic activity has grown. But, of course, the resemblance between the two kinds of furthering is very slight. Phase A only furthers phase B in furthering itself—it is active in the way of self-conservation, and its activity happens, also, to conserve B. Speaking in metaphor, we may say that A struggles not to *aid*, but to *get*, B. But with the rise of conscious centres, conversant with "ideas," "objects," "ejects," as such, furthering may take on a novel form. Sympathy proper may supervene. Centre A may further centre B, even though the attitude involve pain, and consequently, to this extent, *self-thwarting*. B, of course, is present to A only in the form of representations. Seeing, however, that these representations *occupy* A's consciousness, B, for whom they stand, seems *really* there. Altruism, and that often in the line of the greater resistance, comes into force. Sympathy of this sort is a complete novelty which alters the world. There arises a revolt against Nature and the ways of such sentient as live too near to Nature; the same revolt which excited the surprise of Huxley. Benevolence, as prompted by sympathy, has risen above the order in which it appears!

An instructed sympathy is golden.<sup>1</sup> But there are those who look at it askance. They urge that the development of "inorganic" Nature, of plant, animal, and conscious life has been achieved largely or mainly

<sup>1</sup> Hence Bain observes: "If we were on all occasions touched with the unhappiness to others immediately and remotely springing from our conduct—if sympathy were perfect and unfailing—we could hardly ever omit doing what was right." For Bain, of course, morality presupposes social relations.



through struggle, and that we are at fault in recking much of others, and more especially of the weak and "unfit." We are to consider Nature and harden our hearts. The reply is that we cannot take our instruction from lower activities—from Nature, from conscious life lying too near Nature, or even from the primeval Ground. It is just because the world rose out of the dark, out of depths far below moral personality, that it contains so much which ought to be modified or swept away. The rise of conscious life was a break with Nature: the development of that life is to leave Nature far behind. On the other hand, zeal for sympathy must not take us too far. To begin with, there is nothing mysterious about this attitude. "Furthering," be it remembered always, is as fundamental a fact as is "thwarting." At the outset and in the abyss conflict predominates, but that is all. And in respect of furtherance as it shows in conscious life, "the sympathetic instincts and the egoistic ones . . . are co-ordinate. They arise, so far as we can tell, on the same psychologic level. The only difference between them is, that the instincts called egoistic form the much larger mass."<sup>1</sup> Activities of this sympathetic sort may be as inherently pleasant as any others. It deserves note, withal, that reflective sympathetic activity (as opposed to *instinct*) may involve an excess of pain, but that it is not always avoided on this account. Bain explains this persistence in painful activity as due to the "fixed" idea. I would add that the "fixation" of such ideas is often due to our *free* activity in the line of greater resistance. Cases of this kind go to swell the empirical proof that Determinism (Part II. Chap. VI. § 8) is quite unsound.

<sup>1</sup> W. James, *Principles of Psychology*, i. 325.

## EGOISM AND ALTRUISM

§ 9. Folk who live for themselves and, at most, a few intimates, do most of the world's work and do it well. Altruists do not make boots or screws or carpets for other persons; do not keep our cities stocked with commodities, our drains in good repair, or our railways, mines, and steamships in working order. The City of London is "a sanctuary of Plutus; a place where men think only of profits and yet accomplish more good than all our philanthropists."<sup>1</sup> And even the great egoists of history — men like Cæsar, Napoleon, or Alexander — in the pursuit of ends of their own making have usually brought other and most excellent developments to pass. In the pietistic language of Hegel, "God lets men direct their particular passions and interests as they please; but the result is the accomplishment of—not their plans, but His, and these differ decidedly from the ends primarily sought by those whom He employs."<sup>2</sup> Like the nitrogen-fixing bacillus which, in satisfying its petty hunger, makes a precious and unintentional gift to the land, men bring to pass much more than they seek. Hence an egoist is often more useful than an altruist to whom "good" men turn. Even the most ruthless man of action may have the virtues of his defects. There is much in progress which is to be bought only at a great price. History has been called the martyrdom of man. And there are required men who shall be thorough and not blench by taking thought of the miseries which they inflict.

<sup>1</sup> Patterson, *Economy of Capital*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. 302. Hegel's "God," of course, is no other than the IDEA; not a person with a specific psychological career.

## NOXIOUS EGOISTS AND ALTRUISTS

Of course the ruthless man is by no means always of use. There is suffering, and there are frequently no satisfactory results. Of what service was the baron whose castle contained the remains of hundreds of children who had been violated, tortured, and slain? Even Hegel could not say how the "absolute cunning" of the IDEA used this man, or why, indeed, the IDEA brought the monster into being! (This is one of the problems which vex Theism or Panlogism, but present no difficulty to believers in the alogical Ground.) This egoist is merely or mainly noxious. On the other hand, there are numberless altruists who afflict mankind. An instructed sympathy, as we observed, is golden. But misdirected philanthropy, private and legislative, has been a scourge. Even the Inquisition, we are told, had in view the best interests of human "souls." It was devised by "good men," who groaned at the woes which they had to inflict. Torquemada, philanthropical, let us suppose, in intent, wrought far more evil than the child-slaughtering baron de Retz! His work is a mere sully of history—one of those things which makes us rejoice that reality is not fixed, but in change.

THE INJUNCTION "LIVE FOR OTHERS" CANNOT  
STAND

The altruistic attitude is often judged leniently where it fails. It is a revolt against the *solitude* (§ 3) wherein I arose—a "practical" ratification of the belief that there obtain conscious centres as real as mine. It tends to bring more harmony into a universe where conflict was once lord. Hence the mere attitude has

its worth. And instructed altruism, when not forced on unwilling debtors, on stalwarts who resent sacrifices made in their behalf, may command respect. Still, the familiar one-sided injunction, "Live for others," cannot stand. A community in which everyone lived only to make sacrifices for his neighbours would be absurd.<sup>1</sup> The most important consideration is that the individual—the individual of positive achievement—shall grow and thrive. The individual is the most real of appearances. He is a conscious form of the activity of the Ground. It is his nature to grow, and he ought emphatically to live so as to develop himself. Note incidentally that egoism or "self-seeking" is no cult of the abstract "I." It is realised in definite experiences. I may live for business success, for political glory, for theoretic science, for art, etc., with intent to realise that which will flower in my centre. In succeeding I possess concrete achievement and do much more than affirm an abstract "I"! And my growth, after all, is not a thing apart. Society consists of related individuals. It gains, I presume, by the enriching of any of its "parts." Now, as we saw, there are very many self-interests which are inevitably others' interests as well. Here the individual, in pursuing his own ends, advances those of his fellows. But even when this is not the case, the egoist may be bettering one "part" of those related "parts" whereof society consists. He works *directly* on the "part" of which he is immediately aware—to wit, himself. And such direct action may be far more important than *indirect* efforts to promote the weal of sentient outside himself. Hence circumstances may render egoism of command-

<sup>1</sup> This ridiculous ideal has been championed by various modern "theosophists" and even positivists.



ing moral worth. There are no *a priori* ethical "principles" which impose the altruist attitude on all. Morality is a novelty in the universe—one of our many inventions. Let us take heed that we invent well, rejecting all "universal principles" which hamper life.

#### THE VIRILITY OF A NATION MAY BE SUPERIOR TO ITS CREED—NAZARETH MORALITY IMPUGNED

In certain circumstances it is good to live for others. It is good, also, to live for yourself. A like contention applies, also, to nations. The first duty of a small community or nation is towards itself. It ought to grow in stature, to prosper and be strong.<sup>1</sup> It ought not to turn its cheek to the smiter, as a morality of decadence enjoins. It ought not to court the treatment meted out to antelopes, rabbits, and sheep. It ought to be malevolent when its interests [self-conservation] dictate. Virile nations, indeed, act thus, whatever be their religious faiths. Inconsistency, as we observed, may be required by practice. The story of Britain illustrates this truth remarkably well. The British have taken great care to forget their religious ethic at need. Leading features of this ethic are benevolence, humility, patience and long-suffering, a readiness to take blows meekly and forgive indefinitely often.

<sup>1</sup> Its internal well-being is not compatible with a too indulgent attitude towards the "unfit." The weak have a duty towards the strong—not to stand too much in their way. Benevolence easily runs into vice, menacing the free and happy development both of living individuals and individuals as yet unborn. It belongs, then, to that category of action which is usefully discouraged by being labelled "bad." The satisfaction of our sympathetic instincts is usually pleasant. But this indulgence often produces results worse than those due to actions which are classified popularly as "crimes."

There has been no theoretic rejection of this ethic—it has sufficed just to ignore it at times. The virility of the race has been above its creed. The lion has scorned to behave always like the “lamb.”<sup>1</sup> The march of Britain to success has been the repudiation of Christian ethic in act.<sup>2</sup> True, her sway has been beneficent on the whole. A power which has once succeeded is free to cast in of its abundance at will! *Then* the discarded ethic is remembered, and becomes, no doubt, a valuable modifying force. But clearly the all-important matter at first is—to succeed!

#### EGOISM OR SELF-REALISATION AND PLEASURE

A moral egoism makes for enlarged life, the largest and richest measure of life which circumstances allow, striving not for abstract pleasure, but for reality, of which pleasure is a predicate. On the lowest levels of desire, mere pleasure occupies the focus of *attention*; on the higher levels the content, which is pleasant, rises more and more fully into view. Thus there is pleasure in the contemplation of works of art, but it is the substantive content, and not the adjectival pleasure, to which we chiefly attend. Pleasure, as we agreed, is the index and accompaniment of furthered life. It is nothing which exists in solid singleness and in its own right. Furthermore, we often pursue content, regardless, for the while, whether it comes pleasantly

<sup>1</sup> “Each Society has had to maintain itself in the face of external inimical agencies. . . . This has required the nature of its members to continue such that the destructive activities are not painful to them, but on the whole pleasurable” (Spencer, *Psychology*, ii. 570).

<sup>2</sup> “Love your enemies”—so long as they can by no possibility do you hurt! But own a big stick and apply it vigorously to those who “despitefully use” you!

or not. This is the case (at least in my experience) in "hard" thinking and book-making: pursuits which seem to involve a considerable preponderance of pain. The "fixed idea" or purpose—whether it be fixed voluntarily or by process below the conscious level—may persist in the absence of pleasure and in the teeth of passing dislikes. In fine, the notion that the "accompaniments," pleasure and pain, alone *move* us to volition is quite absurd. And, again, the ability of the Centre to strive in the line of greater resistance, as measured by pain, seems unquestionably an empirical fact.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL AND UTILITARIAN MORALITY

We have spoken of the individual as having a duty towards himself—of a *moral* egoism seeking the largest and richest quantity of life which conditions allow. There obtains, however, an hypothesis which makes morality merely social—a department of practice which has in view a portion of the well-being of individuals, as related in human society.<sup>1</sup> Thus the utilitarianism of Bain recognises two sets of rules of moral conduct: (1) those which are obligatory, securing a limited amount of benevolence, protection from aggression, reciprocity (Justice), etc., and which are enforced by Government, and (2) those which are optional, but which are supported by public approval and rewards. All these rules concern the conduct of individuals as living together in society. Only society in its terrestrial form is contemplated. The improved utilitarianism<sup>2</sup> of Spencer likewise makes morality

<sup>1</sup> Moral duties towards animals seem frequently overlooked.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer rejects the utilitarianism which relies on inspection of immediate facts and "calculation of probable results." He lays stress on inherited nervous modifications which issue in

social. It will suffice to discuss this standpoint as follows. All actions, properly called moral, should be useful, *i.e.* should favour mediately, if not immediately, the happy development of a conscious centre or centres. An arbitrary code of morality is fit only for Fuegians or the nursery. Utilitarianism has been of great service, providing a passage from morals of the customary and theologic sorts to the "rational" or reflective ethic of philosophy. But the range of the ordinary utilitarian is limited—he is too often hampered by materialism, and takes "society" as it exists here and now, as of sole moment. Further, the worth of the individual as such escapes his ken. Is a man who has been marooned on a coral island, with no hope of rejoining his fellows, outside the pale wherein the distinctions of "moral" and "immoral" apply? He is free, let us suppose, to wallow in drink or live as excellently as the conditions allow. And he prefers the rôle of wholesome hermit and thinker to that of pig. Is his choice indifferent in a moral regard? Our idealism compels us to say no. The man is no negligible existence—he is to worsen or improve the development of the universe of which he is a part. An enlightened self-interest is fruitful in good things; is an excellent way of acting which certain emotions, "responding to right and wrong conduct," which behave as moral intuitions for us. He holds that "experiences of utility organised and consolidated through all past generations of the human race have been producing corresponding nervous modifications which, by continual transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition" (Letter to Mill). This contention has surely a large kernel of truth. Note incidentally that this explanation admits that *experiences* can *produce* nervous changes, and compare it with the materialist doctrine of consciousness and body taught in *First Principles*. The latter doctrine cannot be worked satisfactorily for long.



merits what support it can get by being labelled "moral." If it is "moral" to promote the well-being of others, it is surely "moral" to do the like for one's self. Further, I must insist that *self-interest works for more than the passing satisfactions which the plain man and the ordinary utilitarian have in view*. The grade of each sentient counts for something in the development of *cosmic* life. The consummation to which creation moves<sup>1</sup> will be the better for the excellences which any and every individual can bring.

### EXCELLENT LIVING

Opinions as to excellent living will always differ to some extent. Uniformity of conviction in this respect is not to be desired. Let variety characterise conscious development. And let the individual not weight himself with everything which society approves. There is nothing sacrosanct in a majority. Its authority to dictate conduct is not measurable by the counting of heads. The heads may be those of fools who seek to impose their pitiful "values" on the few. Their right to command may rest on nothing better than might; on crude advantages such as win battles in Nature or on the lower levels of sentient life. Now, majorities may not only enforce absurd legal rules of conduct, but they may strive to shape "optional" rules of conduct in a preposterous way. We recall that public opinion once found a faith enjoining arbitrary self-denial to its taste. This kind of faith may serve to keep hewers of wood and drawers of water at work, and to this extent, perhaps, it has practical worth. Let illusions drive on levels

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part III. Chap. VII., "The Destiny of Individuals."

whereon other motives will fail! But all individuals are not of the servile herd. They will not allow their "values" to be dictated by other folk, not even when these are a majority posing as public opinion or the "State." And least of all will they accept an ethic of self-denial on trust. "Not your sin, your moderation, crieth to heaven" (Nietzsche). An ethic of restraint is the negation of life. Let us live nearer the "pagan" ideas of ancient Greece, realising ourselves as fully and as equally as we can. Let us indulge, but wisely, not suffering the poorer joys to mar the rich. Above all, let us be personalities fraught with precious *novelty*—novelty which will enrich the consummation toward which we move.<sup>1</sup> The destiny of the universe is determined in part by us. It is to our interest to shape it, so far as may be, as suits us best.

"LIVE BOTH FOR SELF AND FOR OTHERS," BUT HOW?  
A FORMIDABLE DIFFICULTY

We have seen that philosophy must not contrast egoism with altruism, as if the one were merely "bad" and the other "good." It must not endorse an ethic of weaklings in which even prosperity is viewed askance. But now we shall hear the injunction, "Live both for self and for others, for these attitudes may be alike good," and someone, perchance, may heave a sigh of relief. But our perplexities are not laid in this way. I take up an Ego-altruistic attitude when, in realising my private ends, I am, also, a conscious worker in the interests of other folk. Ego-altruistic activities (with the emphasis now on the "ego," now on the "altruistic") are happily both

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap. VII., "The Destiny of Individuals."

numerous and important. Still, self-realisation is often opposed to the interests of others, and is not for that reason to be condemned. To what extent, then, am I to live for self, and to what extent for others? A working union of the attitudes is wanted. Bradley contends that, if we try to unite egoism and altruism, we reach a point at which hopeless difficulties begin. Is there a way out of the *impasse*? We may be able to suggest a goal whither moral and, indeed, all other activities seem to move. But a norm and supreme directive rule of conduct may be far to seek. *The conflict in which Nature is born is continued in conscious life and incidentally in the moral field.* And so long as we have in view discrete individuals, egoism and altruism are not to be harmonised with complete success.

#### FOR WHAT, THEN, ARE WE TO WORK?

§ 10. Egoistic striving is not in behalf of an abstract "ego." There is desired *concrete experience* which shall flower for and within the Centre. Now this egoism may result in the Centre, which is a part of the universe, being improved. The selfish person may become a great personality. In this event the attitude of egoism is good, but, on the other hand, is it good enough? The trouble is that its satisfactions (not excepting the "realisation of intellectual excellence") are insufficient, and lie too much at the mercy of uncontrollable events.

#### WHY SHOULD THE EGOIST WORK FOR OTHERS?

The attitude, in fact, has its peculiar risks. Still, the egoist may think fit to stand his ground. He is

asked to sacrifice a part of his well-being for others, for intimates, for the community, for mankind, and he retorts, "Why?" Now, how are you going to argue with him at all? It has been urged that men find their greatest happiness in working for others.<sup>1</sup> But this is a copybook assumption which is certainly untrue. Temperaments differ vastly. Some men would find their greatest, or, shall we say, more accurately, their durable, happiness in such work; others would not.

#### THERE IS A VICIOUS ELEMENT IN THE IDEA OF SELF-SACRIFICE

We should recall that (1) work for others very often implies happiness, in which case, of course, there is no true sacrifice at all. One good is exchanged for another, and the "altruist" finds himself richer, perhaps, than before! The mother may find her reality in a "sacrificial" devotion to her child. But, again, (2) such work may entail a genuine sacrifice, *i.e.* a sacrifice which yields no apparent compensation at all. And this is the important consideration which we have to face. The person who can work happily for others may be ignored. He is an altruist to the manner born. But the man who finds altruism painful must give us pause. He *might* "fix an idea" of self-sacrifice and sustain it freely despite the pain. Ideas which are attended to tend to pass into act. And, perchance, in the end a pleasurable habit of genuinely altruistic acting might result. But why should the man fix the idea of self-sacrifice at all? A fixed idea can arise involuntarily. We are referring, however, here to

<sup>1</sup> Comte makes living for Humanity the standard, and holds that living for others and increase of happiness are inseparable.



deliberate and sustained effort. Why, then, should a man *voluntarily* incur pain in pursuit of ends which do not attract? The answer is that he will not do so permanently unless the ends *can* be made to attract. He must be induced to view egoistic and altruistic activities alike in a new light. There is a flaw in the idea of self-sacrifice, and this vicious element must be made somehow to disappear.

#### THE UTILITARIAN STANDARD LACKS AN ADEQUATE "SANCTION"

The difficulty, on which I have dwelt, has troubled the utilitarians. Mill, after Bentham, proffers the principle of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" as the standard and supreme rule of private conduct.<sup>1</sup> But he fails to show why this standard should be binding on all sorts of men. He urges that various pleasures are reaped and pains avoided if this standard is upheld. And he attaches great weight to the "feeling of unity" with one's fellow-creatures which the pursuit of social happiness ensures. Well, this harmonious unity is golden—for Mill—but there is no proof offered that it must make appeal to all. Recall that the *solitude* in which a Centre arises is never negatived in fact. We are shut off from one another; our actual conscious processes lie apart. A is only aware of B indirectly. There is a natural insulation which is broken down very imperfectly even in idea. If A were directly aware of the experiences of B and others, sympathetic action would be normal and the social well-being earnestly sought. The result of his conduct to other folk would be re-

<sup>1</sup> Or, as Bentham calls it, the "plain but true standard for whatever is right and wrong in the field of morals."

flected at once in himself. Nothing of this kind takes place. The circles of us conscious humans do not interlace. And A, in fact, may be so constituted that his own directly felt happy reality, rather than the indirectly, and perhaps feebly, represented happy life of society, dominates his will. The advantages accruing to *him* from observance of the standard may be trifling. Utilitarians can cite no adequate "sanction" of which A, as a reasonable being, seeking a happy life, *must* take account.

AN ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE ETHICAL PROBLEM  
REQUIRES FURTHER METAPHYSICS

§ 11. The outlook of the ordinary utilitarian is, in fact, too limited. He means by "society" only an aggregate of bipeds such as people this planet. And he can supply no proof that the private interests of one of these bipeds are intertwined with the interests of the rest. His supreme directive rule of conduct is often of practical worth (*e.g.* to the legislator), but it lacks a satisfactory "sanction" and will not make appeal to us all. In short, the case against the convinced egoist remains weak. Why should the egoist work for others, when, in so doing, he risks a loss—a loss for which, within the compass of this life, there may be no compensation at all? Again, supposing that the egoist acquiesces in a loss, *to what extent* is his egoism to persist and *to what extent* is it to give place to sacrifice? Now, it is not clear how these two questions are to be answered. A complete answer, which meets question No. (2), is probably not to be found. But, perhaps, something can be done to lessen our difficulties. Perhaps. But, if so, there is required further metaphysics; the regarding of the world-order

in a new light in which the opposition between the individual and "others" tends to disappear. The individual, in working for "others," must be viewed as mediating a result—a "far-off divine event"—in which he, also, in a manner not yet obvious, will share.

It seems practicable to indicate such a result. We are not, however, as yet in a position to discuss it.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FINAL GOAL OF CONDUCT—THE "SUMMUM BONUM"—IS CONSCIOUS LIFE WORTH MAINTAINING?

§ 12. Metaphysics is to suggest what the goal of really far-sighted and enlightened conduct should be. There is required the ideal of a *Summum Bonum*, an end to which all other ends, whatever passing value they possess, are subordinate. And in considering this end, we have to decide whether conscious life is worth maintaining at all. Work in the service of human and other sentient need not have their positive welfare in view. Thus the altruism of the pessimists makes for the annihilation of sentient being.<sup>2</sup> Conscious life is a cheat—a regrettable fact which ought surely to disappear. Here the *Summum Bonum* is a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part III. Chap. VII., "The Destiny of Individuals."

<sup>2</sup> Von Hartmann supports altruistic work to this end (the work is largely educational) by the following considerations: (1) The essential identity of individuals as theoretically established; (2) the religious sentiment of identity with the Absolute; (3) Absolute design as that of our own essence; and (4) the need of liberating the "Idea" (or knowledge which has become conscious in us and animals) from the "Will." "Negative absolute eudemonism"—a lapse into the unconscious, with freedom from the pain of living—is his ideal.

"negative eudemonism"—the suppression of consciousness on the ground that it is predominantly and increasingly painful. No doubt, if reality is predominantly and *unchangeably* evil, the sooner sentient beings contrive to die out of it—if they can!—the better. But, of course, there's the rub. Reality is changeful. As meliorists, we allow that conscious living, as we know it or of it, is largely, often mainly, unsatisfactory. But reality may improve. We have to note the commanding fact that "unthwarted" life or activity of the requisite intensity is pleasant (Part II. Chap. V. § 7). Conditions, in which "thwarting" is subordinate, make living a joy. Failing the mutual thwarting of centres, *minor and major*, to exist consciously is to exist pleasantly. An *a priori* pessimism such as that of Schopenhauer is quite absurd.<sup>1</sup>

Still, the problem of a painful world is always with us. And, like the pessimists, we must keep the overruling ideal of a *Summum Bonum* in view. We must first seek to grasp the nature of reality *as it has been and as it is*. And we must then conceive the consummation *towards which* reality moves, and, having conceived it, try to shape the principles of the higher reflective conduct thereto. But our *Summum Bonum*, unlike that of the pessimists, will be positive, not merely cessation of the "wretchedness" of conscious

<sup>1</sup> It would be idle to assert nowadays that pleasure is merely negative or the cessation of pain. Even Schopenhauer admits that artistic enjoyment is a positive fact. But my life contains very much more positive happiness than this. It is far more accurate to say with Spencer that the exercise of any "structure" which is adapted to its special end is attended with pleasure. Life, even as we know it, is, to this extent, inherently pleasant. We shall recur to this topic anon.



life. Like the pessimists, we are to base the higher ethic on metaphysics, but we shall find that the promise of reality is such as to satisfy the most exacting demands. We shall regard *individuals* as the sole realities of which Meliorism need take account. Outside finite centres of consciousness, there exists nothing of any importance at all. The vindication of the universe is the attempt to show that, in the end and on the whole, all finite centres of consciousness are to fare well. And this word "all" is emphatic. A universe in which even a few individuals were first martyred and then annihilated would be, to this extent, evil. It is capable of becoming entirely good, only on the supposition that its abominations will not last, and that *all individuals*, whatever be their passing lots, will finally succeed. We get rid of the superstition that, if all is well with the "Absolute" (and like fictions), finite individual experiences go for little!

#### MELIORISM AND THE PERSISTENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

§ 13. Meliorism is to urge that in the end and on the whole reality becomes favourable to *all* individuals. But this bettering requires a field wider than that which is afforded by terrestrial life. We have to ask, then, whether individuals persist, and, if so, whether there is promise of their persisting happily. Mere persistence, under unfavourable conditions, profits nothing.<sup>1</sup> Now, according to many writers, as well idealists as others, individuals perish, as they have arisen, in time. When the body dies, the conscious centre, which perchance has been cruelly martyred,

<sup>1</sup> To persist with the sole satisfaction of retaining one's cognitive being would be no boon, and might be very much worse than to be annihilated.

dies also. As truth-seekers we are to be guided by the evidence. Sentimental talk for or against the individual is irrelevant. Reality is not so plastic as to conserve or suppress individuals just as we list. Still, we seem entirely justified in urging this. A universe without promise for *all* individuals is in part evil; any philosophical system for which conscious centres, however humble, are first tormented and then suppressed is, to this extent, pessimist. If individuals arise only to vanish, then their miseries remain unredressed, their woes cannot change forward into final good. It is idle to slur over this difficulty. Macaulay observes that "the whole history of the human species is made up of little else than crimes and errors," and Gibbon finds history "little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." They are painting the picture in too dark colours, you say. Well, that is, perhaps, the case, but this record of cosmic evil, interpret it as you will, is grim. Hegel himself terms history a "Calvary." And the unrecorded grey lives and sufferings of the millions are worse than the salient evils which the historian recounts. Nor must the flood of animal suffering be overlooked. There is much that is positively pleasant in life, but the dark side of the story of conscious spirit must give all pause. Optimists who doom the individual have an intractable difficulty on their hands.

There are writers who think that a prospective terrestrial millennium suffices for optimism.<sup>1</sup> In the vague hypothetical future the "adaptation of man's nature to the conditions of his existence" will be complete, happiness being normally attendant on

<sup>1</sup> The animal is left out of account.

this.<sup>1</sup> This prediction ignores the fact that the "conditions of existence" change. "Adaptation" will never be complete while the vista of a planet slowly becoming uninhabitable lies ahead. There is a further difficulty which cannot be shelved. The well-being of *future* societies, which is at best dubious, profits ancestral generations not at all. The retrospect of the world-order is not bettered. The *novel* individuals who are to find life good are, after all, not the victims whose course is run! History is still forbidding, even though its last chapter is to read well.

#### DOGMATIC OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM CANNOT STAND

§ 14. A rejection of the belief that individuals persist worsens the dark side of the problem of life. Evils on evils accumulate, and there remains no field in which they can change into good. Still, even if individuals perish in time, we are not to suppose that any universally true doctrine of Optimism or Pessimism could stand. *So many individuals, so many experienced worlds.* In respect of conscious centres which are martyred and then held to disappear, pessimism would hold true. Reality for such individuals would be bad. But, again, there are individuals whose lives are agreeable, who are glad, so they assert, to live, if only for a short while. These persons are the best judges whether their experiences are satisfactory or not. Reality, even for such perishable individuals, would be good—a process which they desire and of which they approve.

Our standpoint, then, is simply this. We have no use for optimism or pessimism as appreciations of

<sup>1</sup> Spencer.

the universe. We ignore names like the "Absolute." Our concern is with individuals. "Good" and "bad" are adjectives which apply only to the experiences of finites like ourselves. We are to urge that individual experiences will probably be bettered, and will, perhaps, show quite satisfactory anon. And as regards mere terrestrial life, we do not say whether conscious existence *in general* here and now is satisfactory or not. A general assertion—terrestrial life is, or is not, worth living—fails. The value of life varies with individuals. *This* life, on the whole, is satisfactory; *that* not. It seems certain that innumerable men and animals find terrestrial life pleasant. On the other hand, it is obvious that innumerable others do not. In fact, whatever be our creed, we have to note that the night of time has been in part hideous. Is there a promise of compensation in the changes which coming reality will show? Let us suspend judgment until a meliorist metaphysics has had its say.



## CHAPTER IV

### DEATH

#### WHY WE ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL CONTINUANCE

§ 1. DOES the individual persist consciously after what we call death? The question is of enormous importance both in a theoretic and a practical regard. We are unable to shelve the problem as many modern inquirers have been content to do. We have brought it into the foreground, asserting that it must be faced, and, if possible, solved. Our motives show very clear. (1) In the first place, we have to make reply to the pessimists—to those who hold that conscious life is an evil which ought not to be. And unless individuals persist, and persist, too, in ways satisfactory to themselves, we cannot make our reply tolerably complete. We are in this fix. Abandoning fictions like the Absolute, we urge that individuals are the important facts of reality, and that, outside individuals, nothing indeed matters at all. We observe or learn that many (some writers aver most, or even all) terrestrial individuals fare amiss. They are tormented, find life a cheat, and die. Well, reality is evil *just in so far* as this or that sentient fares amiss—has an experience which he does not desire or approve. And if *this* or *that* sentient is not to persist, is not to have a career in which evil will give place to “good”—“good” mean-

ing experience of which he will approve—conscious life stands, to this extent, condemned. His life has been a failure, and it has closed finally as such. The theoretic reply to Pessimism *must* be incomplete. Some lives, at least, are not worth living! (2) In the second place, the practical importance of the problem is considerable, and will become greater as enlightenment grows.<sup>1</sup> It bears obviously on ethics: my solution of it must react on my conduct. If I am to persist, I incline to live accordingly—to develop in ways which may demand effort, but are worthy of a being *who expects to endure*. But if I am to perish, I shall be wise to spare effort, to tread easy and rose-strewn paths. It were folly to be a master-builder when the fane contemplated *must* be overthrown. There is merriment, too, below the heights of endeavour. Amaryllis is good company, and need not be troubled to rock a cradle. I am reminded, withal, by Comtists that I have duties towards the *Grand Être*—to wit, Mankind. Am I to bow the knee to this shambling mortal god? I recall that the *Grand Être* must surely die—die shamefully when the last human being plunges into eternal night. And I am in doubt as to how far I should encourage his futile and purposeless life. His march is over millions of victims;

<sup>1</sup> "The Phœnicians," says Rawlinson, "seem to have had but small expectation of a future life. A usual expression for death was the time of non-existence. . . . On one gravestone alone do we find a hope of future existence indicated." The Pentateuch, as we know, is strangely silent. Even nowadays many folk do not ask, and seemingly do not care, whether they are to survive their brains or not. Others are content with dogma, but give the live issue of survival little thought. Sufficient for this life are the interests thereof! An intellectual development, however, is in progress. It is contended, accordingly, that the problem must come finally to the fore, in which case a decision one way or another will have very serious practical results.

and annihilation, I learn, is the goal ahead. There are those who wax enthusiastic over this crazy march. Retaining some sense of humour, I laugh outright.

The *Grand Être* acts as if the higher progress mattered, whereas it profits him in sooth little, if at all. A gospel of Decadence were timely. Pleasant trifling and Euthanasia: these are ideals meet for a perishing god. *Grand Être!* Abandon the strenuous life; vex yourself no longer with exacting ideals. Take your fill of enjoyment, whatever it be, while you may. "High" and "low," "good" and "bad," "lofty" and "base"—sounds like these will not break the silence into which you must pass. Whether you are a sad Socrates or pig happy, 'twill all come to the same thing in the end. Why, then, ask sacrifices of me, a pilgrim who has so very little to give? My respect for you 'is sapped by knowledge: I have come to realise that your very existence is absurd. All is vain, all futile, all ridiculous: over the ruins of effort must steal the shadows of Cimmerian night.

#### WE NEED NOT DISCUSS THE ORIGIN OF THE BELIEF IN PERSISTENCE

§ 2. We are not asking how the belief in persistence or personal continuance originally arose: the psychologist and sociologist deal with this matter. We are discussing the theoretic worth of the belief as we, or rather some of us, now have it.

#### EGOISM AS EXPRESSED IN THE WISH FOR A "FUTURE LIFE"

We may characterise the *wish* to persist as radically egoistic, and as not the less excellent on this account.

We approve of select parts, and perhaps even of the general tone, of this life. And we desire an indefinitely prolonged experience of such sort as this life, bettered in reflection and imagination, suggests. There need be nothing sublime about this wish: nothing which invests him who entertains it with "spiritual" worth. The egoism is healthy, but calls for no special remark. What is present in idea, the "future life" contemplated, may be very poor—*e.g.* one of eating, drinking, hunting, fighting, or prostrating oneself contemptibly in the court of a man-like god.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, WHILE IMPORTANT, LEAVES  
THE MAIN PROBLEM ON OUR HANDS

§ 3. Thus the wish to survive the body is intelligible enough. The man's egoism, which may be sublime or ridiculous, requires expression in a continued life. But, of course, he may be crying for the moon—may be wanting what cannot be got. It depends on the nature of the universe whether he is to have his wish gratified or not. Now metaphysics acquaints us with the general character of reality or the universe. Hence we are to rest the case for or against persistence on our theory of what this larger reality is and does. We ourselves, be it recalled, are minor phases of reality, and the clue to the solution may not, after all, be far to seek.

IT MAY SHOW THAT WE SURVIVE THE BODY, BUT  
NOT THAT WE ENDURE "FOR EVER"

I shall be reminded, of course, of the results of Psychical Research; the suggestion being that proof



of persistence is forthcoming from this quarter. I am aware of the value of such facts, but, however we interpret them, they cannot establish the conclusion which is desired. In urging that the individual is to persist we do not mean that he is to last only for a short or long while after death. We mean to contend that he is such that he *cannot* disappear: is a phase of reality which *cannot*, in the long run, be utterly suppressed. Tales from the Borderland may be of great worth. They may enlarge knowledge, and show what the first stage of our posthumous careers is likely to be. Ghost-lore will be welcome if it rests on observed fact. But the proof of "Immortality" cannot found solely on such fact. Posthumous folk with whom we are in touch are, someone may urge, not immortal: a contention which has been voiced in quaint fashion by a disciple of Comte.<sup>1</sup> These folk, after a short or long period of activity, may die again, and this time, peradventure, their chequered careers may finally close. It is clear, in short, that the proof of immortality—if proof there be—cannot stand solely on psychical research. We may learn from this quarter that certain sentients continue to exist after physical death. We are not entitled, withal, to affirm that they will go on living consciously (with, perhaps, occasional lapses into the sub-conscious) for ever!

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM "INTUITION" CANNOT PROVE IMMORTALITY

§ 4. No human sentient is aware directly that he lives consciously for ever. The future, *into which* reality, which includes himself, is changing, is yet

<sup>1</sup> By d'Assier in his curious work, *Humanité Posthume*.

unborn. Hence he must not talk of an "intuition" of immortality. "Intuition" which does not *present* the alleged intuited fact is nonsense. And Immortality is not presentable, seeing that the future which it implies is not in being. You do ill to aver that you perceive what does not exist. "Intuition" is apt to begin where competence ends. Too often it suggests cowardly or even dishonest thinking. Only those who want to believe, while being at no pains to think seriously, talk in this way.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM THE "SUBLIMINAL SELF" FAILS

§ 5. It has been urged that there exists a subliminal "Self" which displays, when we succeed in tapping it, rich content. "Consciousness and an exalted consciousness," declared Sir W. Hamilton<sup>1</sup> long ago, "must be allowed in somnambulism." More recently du Prel,<sup>2</sup> Myers, and many others have pressed this point interestingly home. Nay, the "amphibian" soul-life argued for by Plotinus has its strenuous defenders to-day. "Only a part of us is imprisoned in the body, as if one stood with his feet in water, the rest of the body being out of it"<sup>3</sup>—the superior part not being known normally by the "waking" man.

A natural move is to regard this alleged "superior part" as the *immortal* "self." But, not to raise other difficulties, I need say only this. In assuming this

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on Metaphysics*, xviii.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Mysticism*. Cf. especially *Somnambulism*, pp. 144-161, and *Dream a Physician*, Massey's translation, i 191-280.

<sup>3</sup> *Enneads*, vi.

immortality, you assert that which neither you nor the alleged subliminal self can know *as fact*. The critique of the argument from Intuition (§ 4) applies here. Immortality is not a present, and hence intuitible, fact, since the future which it implies is not in being. Even an "exalted" self could only *think* that it *will* or *may* always exist in a conscious form. Such thinking would be extremely welcome, but, alas! metaphysicians still lack enlightenment from this august quarter. It is the unfortunate "normal" self which has the burden of the thinking to bear!

It is not shown than an "exalted" centre of experience, even if it survives the brain, must exist *for ever*. Further, even allowing that there is somewhat which is to exist for ever, is it clear that it must endure in a *conscious* form? What guarantee is there that it will not lapse back into the primitive sub-conscious whence all sentient experience arose?

THE ARGUMENT FROM "SIMPLICITY" FAILS—  
CONSCIOUS LIFE IS NOT SIMPLE

§ 6. Old-world arguments for Immortality, such as that *alleging* the "simplicity," and *inferring* therefrom the "incorruptibility, of the soul," need not delay us. Thus Simplicity, failing complexity, were a dead thing, nothing worth. Even the workaday personal self is not simple. And the fact that two or more discrete 'selves' or personalities, alternate and even simultaneous, may be allied with one body, presents a difficulty which none can ignore. Which of these rival personalities is the real 'simple' soul which is to last for ever?

AND "SIMPLE" INCORRUPTIBLE SOULS MIGHT  
ENDURE INDEFINITELY WITHOUT PROFIT TO US!

You cannot allege that conscious personality is "simple." And even were you able to do so, you would not be entitled to infer what you want. A simple unitary soul might conceivably be "incorruptible," might conceivably endure for aye. But what is desired is that it shall endure consciously. The argument from simplicity leaves this vital requirement unmet.

#### IDEALISM AND PERSISTENCE

§ 7. Foregoing now further wayside criticism, let us work straight up to the solution of which we are in search.

In previous chapters we have viewed reality from the standpoint of idealism. But the kind of idealism adopted must be borne in mind. It was urged that the content of conscious life *samples* the stuff of which the universe is made. We rejected the view that nothing has existed or exists save what individuals happen to know. There was process before conscious individuals came to be; there is process of which they know nothing directly now. The process is psychical in character. It has passed, and is passing, into centres of conscious life. We have to show why it is probable that these centres will persist.

Our kind of idealism respects the individual. But some other kinds are less satisfactory in this regard. Thus Hegelianism gives him very short shrift. We have here one result of the craze for "Universals," of that theory of the CONCEPT as *prius* which leads



to the belittling of fact. "Individuals are born and perish: the species abides and recurs in them all; and its existence is only visible to reflection."<sup>1</sup> "All finite things involve an untruth . . . for this reason they must perish. . . . It is in the kind that the individual has his notion; and the kind escapes from the individual existence by death."<sup>2</sup> Again, we are told in the *Nature-philosophy* that the incompatibility of the individual with the universal is the innate germ of death. There are other forms of idealism, such as those of von Hartmann and others, which have no place for immortality in a conscious form. Of course, the popular view is that a standpoint which "does away with matter" necessarily makes the position of the individual quite secure. This belief is erroneous. It is not enough to reject materialism and to assert that body and brain<sup>3</sup> are psychical throughout. These psychical existences comprise the "neuroses" which support consciousness; but the trouble is that they last only for a more or less short time. When body and brain are "dead," what becomes of the individual whom they served to support? It may be urged that he is only a passing appearance in time. And this, in fact, is what many idealists have said. Nay, von Hartmann observes, "That in all the important systems of modern philosophy (apart from Kant's inconsequence and Schelling's later declension) there is *no room* for an individual immortality, no one can for a moment doubt."<sup>4</sup> Our business, withal, is to show that idealism, on the lines laid down in this work, has plenty of "room" at its disposal.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wallace, *Logic of Hegel*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> Here consult Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 16, 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, Coupland's translation, ii. 83.

## THE CASE FOR IMMORTALITY

§ 8. The case for immortality cannot rest on our mere wishes. It founds on the nature of reality, of which wishes are subsidiary facts. We must consider the general character of reality as it has been and as it is, and we must infer thence reality as it will *probably* be. We are not aware directly that we are immortal; for the future is still unborn! Accordingly, we have to deduce belief indirectly from beliefs accruing in a more or less direct way. And this deduced expectation that we shall endure is rendered highly probable on the following lines.

## PERSISTENCE AND THE ACTIVE GROUND

The CONCEPT is not *prius*. The fount of appearance, we agreed, was sub-rational, "an alogical psychical activity, not bare, but one with the content-variety which it holds in being" (Part III. Chap. I. § 16). Existence, whether changeless or changing, expresses act (*ibid.*). This activity, which is life, cannot abolish or abrogate itself. Hence the Ground as transformed in Nature persists or conserves itself obstinately the while it changes.<sup>1</sup> Appearances which are discussed as "causes" and "effects" show this

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer's statement of the "*Persistence of Force*" (as equivalent to the *persistence of the "Unknowable"*), and of the important truths derivative therefrom, forms the foundation of his philosophy. His "Force" theory of causation has been criticised before (Part III. Chap. II. § 4). I must repeat that his "Force" and his "Unknowable" are surds. But when we replace these surds with concepts such as are suggested here, the dry bones of his *symbolism* awake to life. We are at once in touch with reality: are no longer playing with surds, but stating truth. It is the original obscure Monism which cannot stand.

conservation along with changing content. They take on novel forms, but while one form is vanishing, another, the meeting-place of its "conditions," is coming to be. Peradventure this self-conserving aspect recurs *on a higher level* in the history of *individual* life. I am always changing, but I am also, perhaps, conserved—and for aye!

THE INDIVIDUAL IS A CONSCIOUS FORM OF THE  
ACTIVITY OF THE GROUND—IN WHAT SENSE,  
THEN, CAN HE BE SAID TO PERSIST?

The self-conserving Ground is not timeless, but varies ever like a sunset cloud. The most striking novelty into which it passes is sentient life. Now what guarantee have we that the individual, thus originated, will last? Well, he is a *conscious form of the* ACTIVITY OF THE GROUND *and as such must somehow persist*. "Quite so," you may retort, "but this word 'somehow' is of the last importance. The Ground, considered under one aspect, cannot perish. It is essentially active, and this activity certainly persists. This is the truth adumbrated alike in Spencer's symbolism of the persistence of 'Force' and in Schopenhauer's doctrine of the 'indestructible' WILL. But, considered under another aspect, the Ground does not persist. Its content, which is active, changes—is always taking on novel forms. And in respect of the individual, or conscious form of the Ground, I am inclined to urge this. The content-activity showing in him assuredly persists; but it persists, after the death of the body, in a new form. Content, which temporarily rose on to the conscious level, now drops below it. It continues its protean active career, but—and this is the important matter—

*the man dies.*" Your rejoinder is timely, and compels notice.

Let us observe that the "content-activity," even during the life of the body, is not always conscious. The normal waking conscious being regularly disappears into its conditions.<sup>1</sup> Nay, an expert vivisectioner, tampering with the brain, would cause this being to appear or disappear as he listed. The conscious man, then, is not "indestructible" even during the life of the body. He comes and he goes. He emerges from, lapses into, and re-emerges from, the sub-conscious. Let us suppose that he is asleep, has lapsed into the sub-conscious. Does he exist now? Well, the dynamic which thrust him into conscious reality before will thrust him there later again. Hence it is convenient for practical purposes to assert that he exists? But, truthfully speaking, he is non-existent in the interval between two spells of conscious life. This consideration bears intimately on the solution which we have in view. There is, at any rate, no persistence of an "indestructible" always-conscious personality or ego.

THERE WAS A DYNAMIC WHICH RESULTED IN THIS  
CONSCIOUS CENTRE, WHICH REMAKES IT AGAIN,  
AND, SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, WILL KEEP ON  
REMAKING IT INDEFINITELY.

The Ground (symbolised as "Force" by Spencer, by Schopenhauer as "Will") is, in one aspect, indestructible indeed. And when it changes into

<sup>1</sup> The reference is not merely to sleep, etc. It has been calculated (by whom I cannot recall) that consciousness is broken by unconscious gaps no less than fifty times a second!



conscious life, it does not become mortal. Its obstinate self-maintenance is expressed in a new form in the history of the individual. The individual is foredoomed alike to change, and to endure. Having once appeared, he tends to appear, however modified by change, again. There has arisen a power as obstinately active as was the primeval Ground. The power in question is the most real (Part III. Chap I. § 12) mode of appearing of the Ground. It glows with the concentrated intensity of a conscious whole. A new bent is imparted to the nature of things. The dynamic flowing into, and from, the conscious individual, who is mortal, makes for his eventual renewal. Thus my waking self may be extinguished temporarily by sleep, or by anæsthetics. I am rooted, withal, in ways of activity, in what we may call a habit, of the universe. Hence a being *more or less like, and continuous with*, me will be thrust on to the conscious level anon. I say "more or less like" advisedly. To-morrow's conscious being, after sleep, will contain no contents numerically the *same* as the contents of which I am aware now. And it will even show contents—head and certain body-feelings excepted—for the most part *unlike* those of the being who disappears. In the case, again, of death the eventual new being may be little more than coloured by the activity of the being that was; memory of the foregoing conscious stage, as such, being absent. We shall recur to a consideration of this point later. Suffice it at present to indicate the nature of the dynamic in brief.

Popularly expressed, the guarantee that I shall not be brought to nought is what is termed the persistence of "Force." But this obscure symbolic working-concept

must be revised in the manner which we have suggested. Even Schopenhauer's doctrine of the "indestructible" timeless WILL, if our criticisms of that thinker are valid,<sup>1</sup> cannot stand. There was no primeval Will, and the GROUND, which is thus symbolised, is not necessarily aloof from time. The Ground becomes Nature. And the psychical activity of Nature becomes a conscious being. The history of this being supplies conditions which tend, on its disappearance, to produce another being like and *continuous with it*.

#### GENERAL INDICATION OF THE WAY IN WHICH "THE MAN" MAY SURVIVE HIS BRAIN

It matters nothing whether the finite individual, as regarded intellectually on Hegelian lines, "involves an untruth" or not. He is not menaced or sustained by propositions! There are no "untruths" or "truths" in the abyss whence he arose. He is thrust up along a line of alogical change. He will persist, or, rather, will be *continually remade*, because his being stands for a set, for an obstinate new habit, of reality. Once that the conscious Centre appears, it sets agoing a dynamic which makes for the arising of beings like, and continuous with, itself. It provides thus unwittingly for its "re-manifestation"—to speak somewhat loosely—after sleep, anæsthetics, or even death. The more vividly conscious the Centre, the more confirmed the new habit, or line of direction, of reality becomes. The Centre is not, as we saw, a Monad: it is rather a travelling eddy in which minor travelling eddies appear. It is a focus of intense activity (Part II. Chap. V. § 2), which may drop temporarily to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part III. Chap. I., and elsewhere.

level of the sub-conscious, but which tends to re-become intense, and, therefore, conscious anew. The persistence of the individual amounts, in fine, just to this. There arises a centre of intense psychical disturbance, which in the case of man takes place in a portion only of the body—the brain. This disturbance, like a shock transmitted along a row of balls, may be *propagated*. The appearances in the disturbance-area are always changing, but the disturbance itself goes on. The propagation of the disturbance into a medium *other than the body* is the way in which “the man,” or waking conscious person, must be held to survive the brain.

#### ON A POSSIBLE GOOD DUE TO THE EVIL OF EXTREME PAIN

§ 9. *All* activity is psychical, and intense activity is more effective than faint. *Conscious* content-activity is more potent than like content-activity which is sub-conscious. And the more keen its awareness, *the more forcibly is the Centre asserted in the flux of things*. Here may lie one of the remote compensations for suffering extreme pain. The intense disturbance compels reality, as it were, to accept the Centre with peculiar readiness. The new line of direction is cut sharply into the nature of things. There may result thus some profit in that STRUGGLE OF THE CENTRES which we shall note later. Of course, pleasant as well as painful experiences quicken the Centre. Still, we do well to dwell specially on any consideration that lessens the brute hideousness of pain. There are pains which are useful; and the optimist, who wants to say, “All that is, is right,” makes the most of these. There are

others, often most acute, which are incidents of an imperfect cosmos. Are they suffered altogether in vain? Not wholly, if they swell that propagable disturbance whereby conscious centres tend to *endure*. It may be that even the victim of torture gains something from the spasms which rack his frame. He may pass *with more forcefulness* into that forward-changing reality out of which the unborn future is to emerge. The full import of this suggestion will be seen later.

#### DEATH AND "THE MAN"—DEATH IS AKIN TO SLEEP

§ 10. When the activity of the cortical processes drops below a certain level of intensity, symbolised physiologically as one of "ganglionic friction," "the Man" goes out. "Self" and "not-self" collapse into the sub-conscious. Take note that the conscious waking person dies literally when I go to sleep. I, the conscious being, am no longer an existent fact. In this case, however, I am swiftly and easily *remade*. The cortical processes carry with them the transformed "past." When they *re-become* specially active, the Man with his memory, as we put it, revives. What now of that sleep which is entailed by the death of the body? Well, since the cortical processes cannot become conscious again, the Man must be *remade* elsewhere. He is extinguished completely for the while. "The dying man," as Schopenhauer observes (*Parerga*), "perishes, but a germ remains out of which a new being goes forth." Death is a return, more or less prolonged, to the sub-conscious. And for me, of course, this return is—nothingness. I die when I am no longer to be *remade* in the medium of the



old body. But at the same time my dying issues in process which, temporarily sub-conscious, makes for a renewal of conscious life.

#### A PROBLEM OF IDENTITY—DISCRETE PERSONS AS ALLIED WITH ONE BODY

If the "new posthumous being" is pretty like the last being—"the Man"—and does not break too violently with it, the two will be felt as "the same." But there remains a difficulty which must not be shelved. Binet and others have shown that "several moral personalities, each with a complex and continuous consciousness in which perception, memory, reason, and imagination figure, may arise in the same organism." These persons, allied with one brain, are sometimes as closed to one another as are Jones and Smith who are allied with two brains. Are all these "split-off" persons to be continuous with the posthumous being? The only tolerable answer seems to be this.

We had occasion to discuss why the Ground takes shape as discrete finite Centres (Part III. Chap. III. § 3). "Were Nature (*i.e.* the transformed Ground) entirely conscious, the separate individual would not exist." Now the "split-off" personalities, *insulated* by sub-conscious process, are temporarily just as separate as are Jones and Smith. *They are genuinely discrete centres of consciousness—not manifestations of a simple, unitary monad or soul.* But in the case of *these* peculiar centres the insulation is poor, and, in fact, has been known to break down. In the case of Jones and Smith no such break-down occurs; a gulf of sub-conscious process keeping them apart.

The relevant consideration here is that the "split-off" rival personalities lie *in the same line of direction of reality*. Having perished, they will be *remade* in this line. The posthumous being, if *one* centre of experience, will be, perforce, coloured by them all. Not one of the personalities can be abruptly and finally suppressed: each must have its claim to representation met. Each will change into the "new being" in the measure of its wealth and might.

IN WHAT MEDIUM, AND HOW, IS THE NEW POST-  
HUMOUS BEING REMADE?

The physical order of reality—that in which figure the organisms most familiar to us, sun, stars, trees, mountains, seas, etc.—is probably quite a subsidiary fragment of Nature. Even speculative men of science (who are often, by the way, more metaphysical than the metaphysicians) have to supplement this physical order. Thus they have supposed an "Ether"-order; and this concession, at first vague, grows in importance in their literature year by year. "Ether," of course, is mere symbol—"matter" attenuated, sometimes merely to explain itself!<sup>1</sup> But the important thing is that our symbol-mongers are forced to extend the frontier of Nature as perceived by the plain man. And what they are *forced* to do in pursuit of their special ends, Psychical Research is compelling us to do likewise. We may take it as certain that there are super-physical levels of Nature which we must accept on the same terms as the more familiar objects which float on sense.

The Man who perishes here and now is *remade*

<sup>1</sup> Such mechanical symbolism is fully discussed in Part II. Chap. III.

on a superphysical level. Psychical Research has convinced some of the most careful scientific inquirers of two things: (1) that superphysical Nature contains complex organisms, and (2) that some, at least, of these organisms are lit by centres of conscious experience like ourselves—are allied with persons whom we here, for practical convenience, discuss as “dead.” These conclusions seem entirely sound. Overwhelming empirical evidence can be cited in support of them. We can assert, then, unhesitatingly that posthumous men really exist. This is not a speculative statement, but a record of fact akin to the truths that Eskimos and Patagonians exist. As metaphysicians, we have no quarrel with fact. Our business here is to conceive how conscious life—“the Man”—gets *remade* in a superphysical organism without call for a *deus ex machina* in the shape of a monad or soul. The solution, I venture to think, is near to seek.

The clue, in fact, has already been ably grasped. Bonnet, the Genevan sensationist (1720–1790), throws out a luminous suggestion. He holds that man owns an “ethereal body,” even during the life of the familiar body. And discussing how “memory” can be conceived to survive the brain, he writes as follows: “The fact is that the soul does not dwell here in a state of nakedness, but is connected with a garment that covers it, an ethereal body, so that man remains an *être mixte*, even when the brain decays and he is not clad in a new body.<sup>1</sup> This absolutely imperishable ethereal body, which covers the souls of animals, just as it covers the souls of men, serves to explain the fact that although memory is . . . simply a condition

<sup>1</sup> Bonnet believes in the plurality of terrestrial lives.

of the brain, yet man will have after death a recollection of his former state of existence. This would be inconceivable, if it were simply the naked soul that separated itself from the brain. Now, however, we see that *it takes with it a body, that, from constant intercourse with the finest fibres of the brain, has absorbed into itself traces of what passed in them.*<sup>1</sup>

Bonnet's statement as to the imperishability of the "ethereal body" outruns, of course, any possible evidence, and seems, indeed, inherently absurd. We have no use, moreover, for theories which assume a naked soul or monad. But the hypothesis of an ethereal body makes it easy to conceive how the "identity" of *the Man who was* with the *new posthumous being* is secured. Thus I recall how my identity from day to day, despite intervals of non-existence, is upheld. There are no contents in to-day's experience which are numerically the same as the contents of yesterday's. Nevertheless, in virtue of a certain likeness and continuity, to-day's and yesterday's experiences are taken as those of the "same being." If, now, my familiar physical body dies, what happens? What, after all, but this? The Centre of intense psychical disturbance, and therewith consciousness, shifts to the ethereal body—no migrating monad or soul being involved—and the *likeness* and *continuity* requisite to personal identity are secured. The "present" of the conscious being who awakes in the ethereal body carries a transformed "past." The posthumous Man is different from, and yet the same as, the Man who died.

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Erdmann's *History of Modern Philosophy* (English translation).



## ON THE GENERAL THEORY OF SUPERPHYSICAL ORGANISMS

§ 11. Belief in superphysical organisms allied with the individual has always had a large following. The Hindu theory of the *multiple* kosa<sup>1</sup> and the Platonist one of vehicular media or ὄχοι are specially worth citing. And most religious folk, and, for that matter, savages, believe in that particular organism which Bonnet calls the "ethereal body." Among modern thinkers of standing, J. H. Fichte identifies the soul with the "inner body." Ulrici and du Prel (who argues for the materiality even of Kant's Transcendental Subject!) are of the same way of thinking. The latter-day theosophists assert the reality of a number of superphysical "vehicles" or bodies,<sup>2</sup> while the numerous spiritists, also, believe in one or more such bodies, conceiving them often in a crude, materialistic way.<sup>3</sup> If the metaphysician is asked what worth he attaches to such views, what reply is he to give? Well, answer is readily made.

### OUR RADICAL EMPIRICISM TAKES NOTHING ON TRUST

Empirical proof of the reality of an "ethereal body" has been obtained. So far, so good. But, asked to believe that individuals have, say, five or six bodies, all of these existing in different media at the same time,

<sup>1</sup> The ego is "enclosed in a succession of cases (kosa) which envelop it, and, as it were, fold one over the other, like the coats of an onion" (Monier-Williams).

<sup>2</sup> The list given in *Esoteric Buddhism* bears a singular resemblance to that drawn up by Paracelsus.

<sup>3</sup> Materialism, of course, is quite compatible with belief in a "future life." "The materiality of the soul," remarks Guizot, "was in the first [Christian] centuries an opinion not only admitted, but dominant." Yet the soul, thus coarsely conceived, was held to survive the body.

we shall demur. The ordinary inquirer has no means of checking assertions of this kind. Metaphysics is glad to rethink any facts which promise to further its purpose. A grasp of the general nature of reality is what is required. Hence all relevant data are welcome. But Metaphysics takes, does not make, facts. And it must ignore alleged data the reality of which is the subject of disputes. Its *bête noire* is the deceptive Faith-world — the subjectively real show which is mistaken for something more (Part I. Chap. I. § 3). The private cosmos of the mystic, extremely interesting, of course, to himself, may be of very small account in the universe. And we have to take account not only of the sincere, but unreliable, mystic, but also, and very frequently, of the liar, twaddler, and fool. Our safeguard is to subject all statements to the empirical test. What actual appearances lie behind the propositions in which mystical writers indulge? Sentient experience, after all, is the only wear. Written propositions are sometimes treated almost as objects of worship. They are, at best, makeshifts or substitute-facts (Part I. Chap. II. § 15). At their worst, they become only peculiar designs in ink.

In fine, it suffices to urge this. Most folk, at any rate, who believe in *numerous* superphysical bodies allied with each individual, can do so only on the lines of Faith. There is no actual knowledge behind their saying. Philosophy, accordingly, reckes little of this saying—and suspends judgment.

IN WHAT SENSE IS IT TRUE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL  
WILL ALWAYS "HAVE" A BODY?

In one respect, withal, the individual (however few or many bodies are associated with him

now) will always have or be a "body." Let me explain.

When I discuss A's physical body, I may be thinking (1) of a *shadow-body* which exists only in the perception of my Centre (Part II. Chap. IV. § 16); or (2) I may refer to the *indefinitely richer complex* which casts the shadow, and which exists, irrespective of whether I am affected by it or not, in Nature (*ibid.*). I am referring to this richer complex now.

The terrestrial man A begins his career as a conscious *part* of this complex. Only a fragment of the cortex is conscious. If A's body were to become *entirely* (instead of, as now, partially) conscious, A would disappear, and a more complex and complete being, continuous with him, would take his place. This more complete being would have two aspects—a bodily and a conscious. (1) In so far as he produced *external perceptions* in alien conscious centres he would appear as a body. (2) In so far as he was a reality for himself he would be raised above the level of body—would be the conscious centre which has left mere Nature *behind*.

#### ALL CONSCIOUS ACTIVITY IMPLIES CONTENT, AND THIS CONTENT IS ITS TEMPORARY BODY

A centre of conscious activity always implies content, wherein the activity obtains. *Any such content, however protean, however rapidly changing, can be termed a body.*<sup>1</sup> All conscious individuals

<sup>1</sup> My physical "body" is very slow in changing its general appearance. But there may well exist, on other levels of Nature, "bodies" which alter radically from moment to moment as the activity of the conscious Centres allied with them determines.

arise in a continuous basis: in the psychical mother-stuff of Nature, "physical" or "superphysical," in which they may "travel"—as propagable Centres of disturbance—but from which they never escape.

In this sense the individual will always have, or rather be, a body. Thus a god might have a vast region of Nature as his body. He would occupy, as it were, a vast tract of content in the transformed Ground. Here, then, is one sweeping assertion which Metaphysics seems fully entitled to make.

#### DEATH, THE BORDERLAND, AND AFTER

§ 12. Death, metaphysically speaking, is only an incident. It is quite absurd to regard it with dismay. This present life is not paradise after all.<sup>1</sup> *Il faut passer par là*—but how many millions of folk find it a cheat! A large minority, perhaps even a majority, are well rid of it when they go. The all-important consideration—on the supposition that evil changes forward slowly into good—is that the Individual does not exist on sufferance, divine or other, but tends inevitably to be remade, and in this way to "persist."

And, of course, they may differ fundamentally in form and structure from anything such as the biologists' familiar organisms present.

The "forked-radish" type of organism, which at once supports and limits my present conscious life, has one unavoidable but grave defect—*so very little of it (a small tract of the brain) is directly allied with consciousness*. The conscious Centre is thus at the mercy of a vast mass of sub-conscious natural accompaniments which condemn it to peculiar limitations. We may conceive that there exist Centres which have few or no such sub-conscious accompaniments, and it is well to bear the likelihood in mind.

<sup>1</sup> "Whence did Dante take the materials for his hell but from this our actual world?" (Schopenhauer).



One lapse, more or less, into the sub-conscious matters little. We do not mind the coming of ordinary dreamless sleep. Of what account, in the long run, is a death-sleep from which we are to awake?

Metaphysics not being a geography of "unseen worlds," we need make no pretence of possessing special knowledge of this sort. We are not impatient to hear detail, for we shall ourselves study such worlds empirically anon! Meanwhile, we note that terrestrial "psychical researchers" work under limitations which are very severe. Even approved communications from ex-terrestrial beings might be unsatisfactory. The translation of them into terms of our experience might fail. We cannot imagine even a new colour or sound or petty organic feeling, much less complex lives which may become widely different from our own. The subject of posthumous experience has been tapped to some profit, but the living detail will certainly escape our ken. And so, with no lack of sympathy for those who discuss the Borderland, etc., we pass on.

#### THE PLURALITY OF TERRESTRIAL LIVES

§ 13. There remains the consideration that the Individual, after an experience of "other worlds," may plunge once more into the whirlpool of terrestrial life. For of what, after all, does the Individual really consist? Well, in one aspect, that of his activity, he is NOTHING BUT A "WILL-TO-LIVE," OR TO BE CONSCIOUS, IN PARTICULAR WAYS. He is a Centre of psychical forces which, in accordance with a previous conclusion, tend to persist—tend to maintain themselves, barring adverse influences, intact. Hence, he who

dies unsated with a particular kind of life will, sooner or later, face this kind of life again. He will be borne thither by will-sprung forces which worked aforetime in his conscious life, and which, driven into the sub-conscious, work blindly, but not the less surely, in the dark.<sup>1</sup> There seems a fatal necessity here. The posthumous man himself will surely die. But—to adapt<sup>2</sup> a passage of Schopenhauer's—"a germ remains out of which a new being goes forth, which steps into existence without knowing whence it comes or wherefore it is just such as it is." The new being comes to light in the confused consciousness of a babe. There is a fresh remaking of the individual in a terrestrial medium of body and brain. Consciousness re-dawns in such conditions as *realise* the peculiar "will-to-live." Another plunge into terrestrial life, with its "particular ways" of conscious living, is enforced.

### THE SUB-INDIVIDUAL

§ 14. I do not wish to multiply terms without good reason. But henceforth we are to draw a distinction between the Individual, or centre of consciously felt content, and the Sub-individual, *i.e.* the matrix of sub-conscious content which backs conscious life, and into which the total individual lapses temporarily at death. Conscious life may be likened to a clear peak, the top and base alike of which are lost in cloud. The cloud *at the top* is the Sub-individual. The clouds *at the base* are those sub-conscious, but psychical,

<sup>1</sup> Not, of course, as "volitions" which imply consciousness (Part III. Chap. I. § 10).

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer does not seem to have allowed for the likelihood that there obtains a very considerable interval of conscious experience between two successive terrestrial lives.

processes of Nature which are implied when we speak of the physical brain and body. We talk sometimes of a peak as "making cloud," and the expression may serve us here. The cloud at the top is being "made" more dense: the Sub-individual is always being reinforced during conscious life. The peak one day will vanish; the cloud at the top, fraught with my destiny, will float away.

This cloud at the top may be very dense—in *complexity and extent* far superior to the passing experience of which I am now aware. It resumes the results of long periods of my living—is an existence of great richness, from which the posthumous "new being," in part, will arise. But in respect of being "dark" or sub-personal, it is inferior to the conscious man, narrow and petty as may be the passing experiences which that man possesses consciously at any given moment.

ON THE THEORY OF A "HIGHER SELF" OR CENTRE  
WHICH MAY EXIST SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE  
EXPERIENCE OF THE CEREBRALLY BASED PERSON  
OR "MAN."

§ 15. But now I have to face a possible complication. Am I quite sure that my Sub-individual is *wholly* sub-personal? May it not comprise a centre of experience which exists simultaneously with the momentary passing experience of which I, the man allied with a physical brain, am aware? My lack of direct knowledge of such a centre goes for nothing. I am not directly aware even of you. I should not be directly aware of another centre even if it arose in alliance with my brain (§ 10). I can only *infer* the

existence of another centre from such marks of its activity as may appear within myself. And as regards this matter of the sub-individual, I must place myself at the mercy of the evidence. I may have to believe in a subliminal conscious centre, despite the fact that it does not *itself* appear directly within me.

This hypothetical centre cannot exhaust the sub-individual any more than I, the cerebrally based centre, exhaust the reality of the physical organism with which I am allied. It would be a *tract* or *focus* in respect of which the sub-individual is specially alive. Still, it might be a very important focus indeed. Thus it might have a great deal of knowledge "about" *me*! Its *conscious acts* might account for much which is puzzling in the experience of which I am aware. The "theosophists," following the mystics of the East and West, have laid peculiar stress on the reality of this "higher self." And there are many ordinary philosophers—citing a wealth of suggestive facts—whose arguments in this regard merit the closest attention. Many changes thrust on my life from the side of (what we called provisionally) the sub-individual may not proceed from a sub-personal source at all. The sub-individual, we saw, is a body (or bodies). But, like the physical body, it may, even now, be conscious *in part*. And this distinct conscious activity, so closely related to my life, may work to results of importance in the fashioning of my deeds and thoughts. We are to consider anon the subject of the plurality of lives. Suppose, however, for argument's sake, that individuals have a plurality of lives. And suppose, further, that an individual is born ["remade"] whose prenatal



history has comprised very numerous and very fertile lives. In this case the sub-individual would be extremely rich. And allied with this sub-individual might be a conscious centre, *also very rich and quite independent of the new brain and body*. Such a centre might be far superior, in respect of wisdom and even morality, to the closely related centre which arises in the animal body. Might it not prove a modifying and guiding power in *helping* to determine the line of growth of the cerebral man? And may not the glowing genius of certain hitherto unexplained humans be in part accounted for in this way?

THE SUBLIMINAL CENTRE MUST NOT BE CALLED  
"DIVINE"

We must protest, withal, against the practice of mystics, as contrasted with philosophers, of discussing this hypothetical Centre as if it were necessarily "divine," as "the God within," and so forth. The word "God," when soliciting our respect, indicates a being who is, at any rate, *very* wise, very powerful, and *also* beneficent. But subliminal centres need be none of these things. In early stages of their development they must be barely conscious, very stupid, and of little or no importance for the careers of the centres with which they co-exist. They are evolved, at the outset perhaps, in connection with the higher animals, and they cannot escape from the conditions imposed by their history. It would be futile for us to locate a "god" in the rude sub-individual of a Fuegian savage or an ape. Nor, again, can we maintain that, if a subliminal centre slowly becomes *wise*, it must also *pari passu* become beneficent as well. The subliminal centres of many advanced individuals

may be aggressively egoistic, and in this sense predominantly evil. Hence, however exalted the subliminal centres of certain persons may be, we must avoid crediting all creatures with a "divine self" which lies behind the threshold of the waking life. There are extravagances of mysticism which ignore bare common sense.

In the course of the next chapter a further aspect of the Sub-individual will be discussed (§ 9). In this aspect, which is dealt with in connection with my hypothesis of the *Struggle for Births*, the Sub-individual shows as stupid and ruthless as a natural force.

#### A COMPLETE THEORY OF THE STANDING OF INDIVIDUALS STILL LACKING

§ 16. The question of persistence has, so far, been discussed with human centres of consciousness mainly in view. But innumerable beings other than men are born and die. A complete theory of the standing of individuals has yet to be framed. Pending satisfaction in this quarter, let us pass on to consider some of the salient problems associated with Birth and the Plurality of Lives.

## CHAPTER V

### BIRTH AND THE PLURALITY OF LIVES

"Surely death acquires a new and deeper significance when we regard it no longer as a single and unexplained break in an unending life, but as part of the continually recurring rhythm of progress—as inevitable, as natural, and as benevolent as sleep."—Professor J. M'Taggart in *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 134.

"We shall . . . have many lives—perhaps many millions of lives, and perhaps an infinite number."—*Ibid.*

"One might very well distinguish METEMPSYCHOSIS as the passage of the entire so-called soul into another body, and PALINGENESIS as the decomposition and re-formation of this individual."—Schopenhauer's *Essays* (Belfort Bax), p. 259.

### A RETROSPECT

§ 1. WE have urged that the human individual, who dies, will be remade again and again. It is the nature of reality which is expressed in this basic fact. Further, considered in one aspect, this individual is just a will to be conscious in "particular ways." Does he die unsated with terrestrial ways of living? Then the sub-conscious into which he collapses will have its peculiar "set." There results the likelihood that, later on, he will be remade so as to live the terrestrial life once more. His fate is decided by his own inmost essence—by the psychical forces of which he used to consist. The conscious being is nothing apart from its active content. If it is to be renewed,

these content-activities must rise once more on to the conscious level. On the other hand, the activities will not continue aloof from change. Meeting novel activities, such as those of a new body, they will be coloured, and, to this extent, be transformed, by these. But this is the fate of all "conditions" whose coming-together and mutual invasion produce (or rather *are*) events. Continuance implies change, but will take the line of least possible qualitative loss. Struggle, as we shall see, is presupposed even by Birth!

Fundamentally, then, the continuance of the Individual is a *case* of the continuance or persistence of "Force"; Force being a symbol of activity, conscious or sub-conscious, which is psychical throughout. "Force" persists, yet, because of the content always implicated with it, it changes also.

#### PALINGENESIS<sup>1</sup> AND THE PLURALITY OF TERRESTRIAL LIVES

§ 2. Our attitude towards Palingenesis is frankly this. (1) There is a dynamic which tends to make and remake the individual. He will be remade whenever the sub-conscious—the sub-individual—into which he collapses at death is once more raised to the con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. citation from Schopenhauer heading chapter. The terms "reincarnation" and "metempsychosis" are alike objectionable. There is no passage of a full-blown "soul" into a "body" such as is suggested. The "body," in fact, furnishes the main part of the outfit of the new conscious being or "soul." Cf. the observations on Neuroses and Psychoses (Part II. Chap. V. § 9). The "new being," in fact, *includes the actual life of the brain*. A further objection to the term "reincarnation" would lie in the fact that palingenesis is presumably not solely in connection with physical bodies.



scious level. The conditions requisite to this result cannot always be complete, but reality is such that, sooner or later, they become so. (2) Individuals of the ordinary human sort seem likely to be remade in the course of successive terrestrial lives.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer hugs truth closely when he writes that "these constant new births constitute the succession of life-dreams of a will which is in itself indestructible,"<sup>2</sup> but we must accept "will" with the reservations already made. Further, we need not suppose that this "will," when "instructed and improved by so much and such various successive knowledge in a constantly new form . . . abolishes or abrogates itself."<sup>3</sup> That of which the character is to be active cannot, as we saw, abolish itself, so that, for weal or woe, the "will" has to persist. It is not fated to be reborn always into terrestrial life—an unsatisfactory, squalid, and, in many respects, contemptible experience at best. But it is self-doomed by its own essence to have "life-dreams" of some sort. Collapsing into the sub-conscious, it presses surely toward conscious existence once more. Schopenhauer, of course, wished to believe that conscious life must come to an end. He was tainted with the decadent mysticism of India; with the degeneracy which brands conscious desire and volition as defects.<sup>4</sup> We must repeat that his pessimism is quite unsound. Conscious activity, bar thwarting, is pleasant, and, to this extent, good. And the Ground of appearance, which is ESSENTIALLY active, passes fatally into conscious life.

<sup>1</sup> We have agreed not to discuss further the interval which spans the gap betwixt such successive terrestrial lives (Part III. Chap. IV. § 12).

<sup>2</sup> *World as Will and Idea*, Coupland's translation, iii. 300.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> We seem to detect here a phase of that enervation of the Hindu Aryans which was due to climate.

The Individual, in virtue of this activity, will be upheld, whether he desires to endure or not. And in later eras of development even Schopenhauer may come to rejoice that such is the case. The temperament and conditions that make for pessimism may disappear.

BELIEVERS IN PALINGENESIS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY  
NUMEROUS AND INCLUDE DISTINGUISHED NAMES  
—THIS FACT, WITHAL, IS NO GUARANTEE THAT  
THE BELIEF IS TRUE.

§ 3. Belief in the plurality of terrestrial lives has always had a large following. Schopenhauer, indeed, holds that it has a better claim to be considered an *a priori* "idea of the Reason" than any of Kant's three scholastic figments. It is met with, in a crude form, even among rude folk such as Papuans, Zulus, Dyaks, etc. Untold millions of Hindus and Buddhists accept it as a matter of course. We are not, withal, to regard these millions as necessarily witnesses to its truth. Absurdities are too often associated with their faith. Thus, we read in the *Ordinances of Manu* that "a Brahmin who drinks spirituous liquor would pass (into the womb) of worms, insects, winged insects, winged (creatures) that eat manure and beings delighting in destruction," and much more nonsense of a like sort.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Buddha is credited with a "jumble of metamorphoses"<sup>2</sup> altogether too ridiculous to cite. Like absurdities, however, it is worth noting, are voiced by the Pythagoreans, and even by Plato and Plotinus in the West. Plato, for example, has it that cruel, avaricious, etc., men can become hawks,

<sup>1</sup> *Ordinances of Manu*, pp. 374-375. Cf. also pp. 373-377 (Sacred Books of the East).

<sup>2</sup> Monier-Williams.

reptiles, fishes, etc., while Plotinus actually suggests a possible retrogression into plants! The existence of such mythology shows that *we must not cite uncritically great names, much less mere numbers, in support of palingenesis*. It is clear that even some famous "authorities" held evidence, such as we require nowadays, very cheap! And the fact that millions of folk believe in it is no proof that a theory is true. Empty heads do not improve in value when counted.

Modern Western thought has by no means ignored the belief, popular opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. Christian dogma, however, has suppressed it in part. ". . . It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews ix. 27). Christianity has been a great practical force, but its influence on philosophical thinking has been malign. Not to dwell on this matter, we can cite many hard thinkers to whom palingenesis appeals. Leibnitz inclines to hold that the "monads" of human beings are special, but that it is conceivable that others can rise to this grade. Palingenesis in some form seems clearly implied. Hume thinks that palingenesis is the "only system" of individual persistence to which philosophy can hearken. Bonnet, whose views we cited some while back, is entirely convinced of the plurality of lives. Drossbach urges that the persistence of the individual is certain, and that there is a perpetual transition from life to death and from death to life. *Lapses of consciousness in the life-series will serve to make consciousness realised as such*. Drossbach argues for an ultimate renascence of memories, and thinks that later on individuals may be reborn with awareness of their entire pasts. Goethe is

certainly on our side. Schelling, in his later writings, accepts palingenesis; Schopenhauer, Renouvier, du Prel, and Professor M'Taggart have followed suit. Among other names those of Krause, Pezzani, Kardec, Alger, Kingsford, and Maitland (*The Perfect Way*), H. P. Blavatsky, C. C. Massey, Reynaud, and Figuier (to whose book, *The Day after Death*, I owe my first grasp of the belief), Sir Edwin Arnold, Bertram Keightley, A. P. Sinnett, and Annie Besant are to be noted. The modern theosophists accept "reincarnation" with one consent. Their leaders were originally opposed to the belief, but adopted it later as part of the "wisdom" of the East.<sup>1</sup> They have done admirable work in forcing the subject on the attention of the plain man.

#### DO EXISTING HUMAN INDIVIDUALS SHOW FEATURES WHICH TEND TO VERIFY OUR DEDUCTION OF A PLURALITY OF TERRESTRIAL LIVES?

§ 4. We have found the general nature of reality to be such as to imply that "human individuals are reborn in successive lives." We have urged, furthermore, that individuals have a plurality of *terrestrial* lives. This particular assertion about individuals is merely deduced from known principles. We must see how far this deduction is verifiable.

#### WE CANNOT DISPENSE WITH METAPHYSICS

It is not enough to observe ourselves and other human individuals—to urge that certain features or

<sup>1</sup> They were at one time "infinitely far away from believing in reincarnation" (Olcott, *Theosophist*, Aug. 1893). The hypothesis, as pointed out by C. C. Massey, is attacked in fact in *Isis Unveiled*.



qualities which we show "prove" that we pre-existed in former terrestrial lives. Such "proofs" cannot be genuinely complete. The features in question *may* be explicable in this way. But there is a risk that, sooner or later, they may be explained otherwise. The complication of possible agencies is great, whenever human psychology is concerned. Incidentally, we shall point out respects in which popular "proofs" of palingenesis, adopted independently of metaphysics, fail.

Our procedure is on the lines of what Mill used to call the Complete Deductive Method. This has two phases. (1) In the direct one we start from "elementary" principles or "laws" [generalisations] based on immediate observation (or got mediately as deductions from previous inductions), combine these in reasoning, and deduce novel "laws" and instances which must be verified. (2) In the second or inverse one we do not deduce secondary "laws" *a priori*. We first generalise empirical "laws" from fact, and verify these by showing that they are cases or "consequences" of known principles. Our preference is for the direct phase. Accordingly, we have to show that certain features in human psychology, etc., confirm the deduced "law" of the plurality of terrestrial lives.

I propose to indicate very briefly the main directions in which possibly corroborative or verifying data may be sought.<sup>1</sup> The data, taken by themselves, seem insufficient to justify belief in the plurality of lives.

<sup>1</sup> In indicating these corroborative data I make appeal to no class of facts which is not recognised by the plain man. Those who follow the literature of modern mysticism will read of other "proofs." These, whether good or poor, presuppose experience of supernatural kinds, the discussion of which is foreign to an essay such as this.

## I. VERIFICATION BY WAY OF MEMORY

(A) On alleged memories of *definite* events, etc., referred to a former terrestrial life.

§ 5. I never, of course, recall the past. I possess it floating in transformed shape in the present—itsself, as it has been well termed, “specious.” Memory is not my old experience revived, but something, more or less different, which stands for it. I am not clear as to how far this substitute-past can be trusted. I have forgotten wellnigh everything that occurred to me before I was ten years old, and very much, indeed, that has happened since. I find “remembering” is often imagining what never took place. I note that memory, at best a poor thing, has derangements and even “diseases.” The memory-record, even of my present life, is not above suspicion. If, however, I distrust memory in respect of the present life, I must regard alleged remembrances of a former life cautiously indeed! There is a further consideration of which I have to take note. There are *cerebral processes* which feed ordinary memory. When these fail, the remembrances which they support fail also. But, if ordinary memory implies cerebral process, how do I recall events in a former life—events which, by supposition, occurred long before my present body and brain came to be?

Alleged remembrances of former lives often run into the grotesque. We have all met the egoists who recall pre-natal events with ease. And we note that they evince preference for picturesque or famous careers. A cynic, listening to these Pythagorases, might ask if remarkable personalities only are reborn.

Interesting plebeians, he might insist, sometimes return to earth, but dustmen, butchers, laundrymen, and road-menders, never! We must allow that megalomania is rife among mystics, and that the cynic has good cause to split his sides. These extravagances show how easily the merely imagined is confused with what has been.

"Body," observes Plotinus, "is the true river of Lethe." The memory of definite events in former lives can hardly come easily to a consciousness allied with brain.<sup>1</sup> Still it is conceivable that such remembrances occasionally arise. Cerebral process, conscious or sub-conscious, is psychical. And behind the conscious person and his brain is the sub-individual, also psychical, which comes over from other lives. Intense conscious activity, primarily allied with brain, may sometimes raise phases of this sub-individual into notice—livening the intensity of process normally too low to have conscious being. So far, so good. On the other hand, it seems clear that plain men, at least, can rarely have experience of this sort. Drossbach holds that, in the future, all individuals will come to remember their entire palingenetic pasts. Should this speculative prediction be fulfilled, philosophy will surely rejoice. Meanwhile we must possess our souls in patience. The deduced "law" of palingenesis is hardly verifiable by memories such as we have just

<sup>1</sup> "Bearing in mind this point; bearing in mind, also, that even our ordinary definite memories slowly become indefinite, and that most drop altogether out of notice, we shall attach no importance to the naïve question, 'Why does not Smith remember who he was before?' It would be an exceedingly strange fact if he did, a new Smith being now in evidence along with a new brain and nerves. . . . We may, perhaps, congratulate ourselves on our blindness." Cf. my *Riddle*, p. 423.

discussed. Existing witnesses are few, and their competence to speak leaves ordinarily very much to be desired.

(B) On an alleged vague, or indefinite, remembrance of former lives.

There are vague accompaniments of experience, felt along with reverie and even ordinary perception, which seem like echoes of reality of which I was aware in a former life :—

“Something is, or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—  
Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done, I know not where,  
Such as no memory may declare.”

Agnostics, who demur, may be reminded of the saying of Spencer. This thinker is discussing feelings which accompany my perception of landscapes. He detects elements not drawn from my experience in this present life. He falls back, conformably with his general thinking, on *ancestral experiences*, the echoes of which I am supposed to hear faintly once more. Now, this ancestral factor helped to produce my brain, and surely subsists there, in transformed shape, in its result. And when certain cerebral processes happen, this result, not of my making, rises in part on to the conscious level. Quite so. But may not a vague result of *my own* experiences in a past life or lives emerge also ? May not the deeper sub-conscious (which is much more than the transient conscious individual and his brain) be livened into nascent awareness awhile ? Vividly felt content, allied primarily with brain, will “further” like content in the deeper sub-



conscious—will tend to raise its intensity to that characterising the semi-conscious or conscious level. A psychical disturbance in the *cerebrally* based being works changes outside the area where it begins.

"The remembrance of a previous existence," observes Figuier, "is not always wanting to us. Who is there who, in his hours of solitary contemplation, has not seen a hidden world come forth before his eyes from the far distance of a mysterious past?"<sup>1</sup> The witness of mystics, of poets such as Wordsworth, Edwin Arnold, and Tennyson, and of thinkers such as Schopenhauer might be cited in point. At times and in special moods we seem vaguely aware of a past not comprised in this particular life. Our deduced "law" of palingenesis has prepared us to expect that such will be the case. The afterglow of an earlier life may well light us dimly at times.

Caution is desirable when we are discussing pre-existence. Imagination, if its contents are dated vaguely, easily simulates a "mysterious past." And even when there is genuine "remembrance," we are by no means certain for what it stands. It is at least arguable that it is not an echo of *our* pasts, but of pasts which belonged originally to others. The body having an amazing lineage, ancestral "pasts" transmitted by brain may count for much—for how much it is obviously impracticable to say.

#### FALSE RECOGNITION—ON SOME SOURCES OF ERROR

A point of minor interest is the following. Much has been made of the familiarity with which certain

<sup>1</sup> *The Day after Death*, p. 223.

novel experiences strike the mind. Thus a man may be visiting Rome. "I have never been here before in this life, but much round me feels strangely familiar." This is the fact. The inference drawn, not infrequently, is this: "Of course I have had a like experience in a former life"; there is alleged a vague remembrance of a prenatal past. It is well, however, not to go too quickly. There is a pitfall of false recognition, or illusory memory, which deserves note. We greet a precept as like an "old" one which never occurred. This false recognition, at its worst, becomes an annoying disease, or *paramnesia* properly so called. In its milder forms it is probably quite common. When I first saw the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, I felt like one who had been there before. I should be loth to invoke palingenesis when simple psychophysiological explanation might amply suffice.

"False recognition" of the above sort may well be a source of error. But there are various ways in which the familiarity of supposed novel experiences may be explained. Thus a man whom I recognise vaguely may be like an imaginary person of whom I have thought or read. Or the man may really have been known to me in a supernormal manner before—"telepathically," in fact, as a Psychical Researcher would say. It is easy to multiply such likelihoods, which dictate prudence in the matter of furnishing explanations.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO "RECOGNISE" FOLK WHOSE  
PAST LIVES WERE CONNECTED WITH MINE?

On the other hand, it is probable that I often meet folk whose former lives have been intimately con-

nected with mine. We can infer positive psychical forces which tend, other conditions favouring, to bring old friends together again.<sup>1</sup> Suppose that I meet an old friend. His body is new: new, also, are all the belongings appertaining thereto. In respect even of his qualities (content) and character (modes of activity under specific promptings), he will differ from the man who was and died. Still, if the "man who died" colours the new man *very strongly*, I may well feel familiar with the latter on this account. I have not known him in the present life—*possibly*, then, I knew him in a previous one. Such remembrances lack substance, resting on "glimpses of forgotten dreams." But they must be allowed as quite possible, if the plurality of terrestrial lives is a fact. In the case of very marked familiarity, the evidence to a *particular* experient may seem complete.<sup>2</sup> It may or may not be so. We here merely bring the palin-genetic theory to the facts. Whenever and wherever the facts seem to require and verify it, we are content.

## II. VERIFICATION BY WAY OF NOTING PERSONAL "VARIATIONS" NOT WHOLLY EXPLICABLE BY HEREDITY, ORDINARILY SO CALLED, ETC.

§ 6. It was deduced that the individual is remade on the lines of least possible qualitative change. Nothing, however, endures without changing as well. The new man will be as like the old as conditions allow. But mere duplication can never be achieved. A new organism, a new environment and nurture,

<sup>1</sup> Emotions are such forces in a cosmos where all is psychical.

<sup>2</sup> "Two persons who have seen but little of each other are often drawn together by a force equal to that which is generated in other cases by years of mutual trust and mutual assistance" (Dr McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 138).

will forbid this. Still, the sub-individual into which the old conscious centre collapsed at death must be reckoned with. It will play its part in the origin and history of the new man. The latter will have qualities not *wholly* issuing from factors grouped as "heredity" from the side of the new body, nurture, and so forth. Heredity *from the side of the "man who died"* will account for much. So much for deduction. We must verify this inference amid the complexly interwoven facts of life.

Heredity from the side of the new body is admittedly more potent than nurture. Nevertheless, it is a truism to say that it leaves huge difficulties on our hands. Galton's case of the twins who, with the same nurture, became quite different young men, will be remembered. And unlikenesses in the characters and intellectual qualities of members of the same family are ordinarily great, and sometimes amazing indeed. Such unlikenesses, of course, are just what the palingenetic theory leads us to expect.<sup>1</sup> Heredity flows from the new body, but it flows, also, from another quarter as well. And occasionally we seem forced to consider this other quarter. Thus Kant's body-heredity explains little; his brother, by the way, being a nobody. It was not a mathematician who begot Gauss, a musician Handel, a painter Titian; and there is not, says Weismann, any proof that the ancestors of these men possessed special talent.<sup>2</sup> Genius, in fact, often emerges suddenly and, even when inherited from ancestors, may be at its best

<sup>1</sup> It would be folly to hold that *all* such unlikenesses are due to heredity from the "man who died." Some observations on this matter will follow shortly.

<sup>2</sup> *Heredity Essays*, pp. 91-93 (English translation).



only at the *commencement* or *middle* of a succession of individuals. Weismann recognises such gifts as not on a level with instincts, nor, again, as explicable by natural selection, "because life is in no way dependent on their presence." He concludes, obscurely enough, that "talents do not appear to depend upon the improvement of any special mental quality by continued practice, but they are the expression and to a certain extent the by-product of the human mind which is so highly developed in other directions." This kind of explanation merely darkens counsel.

I have indicated elsewhere various little riddles which the body-heredity theorists leave unsolved;<sup>1</sup> the hint being that palingenetic causes may conspire with body-heredity, nurture, and environment to produce the new man. All folk embody such riddles, but it is to the cases of genius—artistic, philosophical, military, etc.—that we naturally turn. The riddles are embarrassing here. You can, for convenience' sake, account for a plain man *as if* he were a product of body-heredity, nurture, etc., and no one is very shocked. The plain man is much like other plain men, and does not draw the eye. But the genius is so different from plain men, so often arises in unlikely places, and so often is obviously "inspired,"<sup>2</sup> that this workaday explanation is felt to halt. Agnostics will appreciate the following passages from Huxley, who is not to be suspected of a partiality for thinking such as ours. "There are Pascals and Mozarts, Newtons and Raffaells, in whom the *innate*

<sup>1</sup> *Riddle* (1893), pp. 415 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Huxley's epithet. He is speaking of the youthful Mozart, who breaks into "music and inspired music." Inspired by a cerebral heredity only?

*faculty* for science or art seems to need but a touch to spring into full vigour.”<sup>1</sup> “The man of genius is distinct in kind from the man of cleverness, by reason of the working in him of *strong innate tendencies* which cultivation may improve, but which it can no more create than horticulture can make thistles into figs.”<sup>2</sup> He speaks, also, of geniuses who are “impelled by instinct, as much as are the beaver and the bee.” While welcoming these statements, we must repeat that the word “instinct” does not apply to cases such as these. “Instincts” do not include *special* endowments of the individual, of little or no use in the struggle of life. And the phrase “innate tendencies” stands for no satisfactory answering thought. Does Huxley mean ways in which the brain, on the prompting of suitable stimuli, will act? His general philosophical position warrants this view. We proceed, accordingly, to criticise his attitude thus. The “innate tendencies,” on Weismann’s own showing, often arise *suddenly*. Suppose, then, that they arise thus in the case of a metaphysical genius with ancestors of no account? Is it the mere body which prompts the rush of the young man to thought? In part, of course, for, to an extent, the man is the brain. But there is no show of a complete solution here. The body, which is a complex of “minor centres” (Part II. Chaps. III. IV., and V.), can have no interest in metaphysics. A pursuit of this character presupposes a conscious person. If, then, the “innate tendencies” do not flow from body, whence come they? The reply is—they are ways of activity such as may flow from the quarter of the “man who died,” who, temporarily sub-conscious, is awaking to conscious reality again.

<sup>1</sup> *Hume*, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

A centre of consciousness, which made knowledge its end in a former life, is being renewed, with a like direction of its activity, once more.

To be is to have become. And if we ignore lesser folk and fix attention on the great, we shall have cause to wonder how many a striking personality has become. There is little to strike the mind in the case of the plain man. But the genius of commanding character and intellectual power compels us to notice and account for him. How is this surprising novelty thrust into life? A factor additional to the body-heredity, nurture, and surroundings is suggested with special force. Palingenetic influences must be considered. These, we may urge, take shape in the ways in which the "new being" grows up within the brain.<sup>1</sup> We must recall here that there exists no permanent "Mind" or "Ego" which can pass from life to life. "Mind," or inward experience, presupposes outward experience, and this latter starts afresh at every birth. Each life-history, then, is a novel affair, coloured, however, by influences in which previous life-histories lie condensed. The "new being" is the organism which has become in part conscious; it is, also, the "old being" in so far as it has been invaded and transformed by the latter.

I said that "*a* factor additional to the body-heredity, etc., is suggested," but is that factor, which presupposes an earlier life or lives, correctly indicated by us? Well, there are many arguable factors which

<sup>1</sup> "A man who dies after acquiring knowledge . . . might enter his new life, deprived indeed of his knowledge, but not deprived of the increased strength and delicacy of mind which he had gained in acquiring the knowledge" (Dr M'Taggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 132).

an ingenious mind could suggest. And I allow, and even urge, that the data, taken by themselves, help us little. Their worth lies in verifying a metaphysics which we have brought to them. We had independent ground for believing in the plurality of terrestrial lives—we find in these data just what our grasp of reality has led us to expect.

PERSONAL "VARIATIONS" ARE NOT ALL EXPLICABLE  
ON PALINGENETIC LINES

"The fruit of every life," observes Krause, "passes over into the next, perhaps up to a higher planet."<sup>1</sup> Hence the unlikenesses of individuals are accounted for *partly* in this way. But it were folly to hold that all such unlikenesses are explicable on palingenetic lines. Setting aside differences due to different natures and surroundings, the new body must be responsible for much. It is psychical throughout, and it resumes in itself an amazing history. It comprises innumerable minor centres—those foci of activity which Leibnitz wrongly took for monads—whose interactions force themselves on the individual who is remade. The brain (coloured, withal, by forces issuing from prior lives) *actually becomes the man!* It follows that individuals are remade only at the cost of being altered, and on a humble level of individuality the inevitable alteration must be very great. The less rich the appulse from prior lives, the less will the new being resemble "the man"—or animal—"who died."

M'Taggart compares physical bodies with hats

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, ii. 679 (Swan Sonnenschein).



which are not made specially for their wearers. The wearers select the hats which suit them best, "The shape of the head . . . does not determine the shape of the hat, but it does determine the selection of this particular hat for this particular head."<sup>1</sup> Quite so. But it is by no means certain that any hat obtainable will quite suit.<sup>2</sup> And the hat selected in palingenesis differs markedly from the familiar "tile." There is no independent wearer who simply puts on his hat. There is no permanent conscious ego which merely annexes, and "plays on," the body. A portion of the brain, coloured in the manner we have suggested, passes into the consciousness wherein "ego" and "non-ego" appear.

It is futile to ignore the arbitrary contribution of body to the make-up of the individual. "The difference of the *moral character* and the physical constitution of the various tribes of South Africa is connected with the nature, soil, and vegetation of their dwelling-places."<sup>3</sup> "The contrast between a sensuous and a

<sup>1</sup> *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> There is a German theory of the *love-match* which seeks to cope with this difficulty. It regards the love-match as due to the individual "will," whose eagerness to be reborn, or phenomenalise itself, "is just the passion of the two future parents for one another" (*World as Will and Idea*, Coupland's translation, iii. 343, 344). Du Prel (*Philosophy of Mysticism*) has followed Schopenhauer in espousing this view. We need not discuss the psychology of passion, which would have to take account of the bodily feelings of the "two future parents." We are content to urge this. Very remarkable individuals (whose need for a special body would, presumably, be great) are born of matter-of-fact parents, who reckon little of passion, and mate like kine. On the other hand, very passionate lovers may have quite ordinary children, or, like thousands of Malthusian couples, none at all!

<sup>3</sup> Galton, *London Journal Royal Geographical Society*, vol. xxii.

reflective nature might take its rise in the outworks of the sense-organs apart even from the endowments of brain."<sup>1</sup> Such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely. The form taken by human consciousness is a *compromise* between the psychical appulse coming from prior lives and the appulse coming directly from the body and more particularly the cortex. And on lower levels of sentient being the body is virtual dictator. A determinate kind of consciousness presupposes a determinate kind of body. A snake or toad consciousness cannot possibly light the brain of a centipede or horse.

Press the point further. Are you still inclined to underrate the influence of body? Well, recall that there obtain character-differences among species of ants and even among members of the same species. "One ant," observes Büchner, "will let herself be killed rather than let go the pupæ which she holds, while another will let them fall and run away like a coward." Recall, further, that an alteration of diet changes a "worker" larva into a queen-bee with its special character. Even "reincarnationists" will be puzzled to trace back such character-differences to prenatal lives! Take the cases of higher animals, whose conscious individuality is beyond doubt. "A cross between a setter and a pointer will *blend* the movements and habits of working peculiar to these two breeds. Lord Alford's famous strain of greyhounds acquired much courage from a single cross with a bull-dog, and a cross with a beagle generations back will give a spaniel a tendency to hunt hares."<sup>2</sup> Who will maintain that the greyhounds' courage was

<sup>1</sup> Bain, *Mind and Body*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Animals*.

inherited from *their* former lives! It is thrust on the animal sentients by their bodies. If, however, mere body-heredity can dictate the character of an animal, we must not over-emphasise palingenetic inheritance in the case of man. We have really, of course, much to take account of besides appulse, potent or, it may be, petty, which comes over from a prenatal past. In popular discussions of the subject this vital consideration is apt to be overlooked.

#### PALINGENSIS AND THE FACTS RELATING TO HUMAN AND ANIMAL FECUNDITY AND STERILITY

§ 7. The verification of the "law" of palingenesis must be sought in the two main directions which we have indicated. I have suggested elsewhere that the facts of human and animal fecundity and sterility may prove instructive.<sup>1</sup> But I do not propose to re-enter on the matter here. It presents special difficulties, and approved data constituting a good basis for discussion are relatively few.

#### ALL INDIVIDUALS, AS WELL SUB-HUMAN AS OTHER, ARE REMADE AND HAVE A PLURALITY OF LIVES

§ 8. It was convenient at first to discuss palingenesis only in respect of Man. Our egoism, perhaps, also exacts this tribute. Humans are the chief (visible) denizens of this planet, and they imagine very often that it exists solely to produce them. We need not examine this crude absurdity at length. We have now begun to discuss animal sentients in respect of the plurality of lives. And, first and foremost, the funda-

<sup>1</sup> *Riddle*, pp. 423-5. Some of the facts adduced—if facts they be—are most suggestive.

mental consideration to be noted is this. *The arguments for persistence and palingenesis apply to all conscious individuals whatever.* There is no favoured nation clause guaranteeing our immortality and renouncing the "beasts that perish." All individuals perish, and all alike must be remade. Individuals are rooted in reality—are aspects of the self-conserving Ground which may change, may become conscious or sub-conscious, but which cannot be reduced to nought. It was urged previously (Part II. Chap. V. § 9) that consciousness, *not the mere grade of its development*, is of prime moment. Conscious life is the miracle. And metaphysics finds that human and animal sentient are alike secure. There is no better case for human "immortality" than there is for that of a lion or dog. And, incidentally, it is well for Meliorism that this is so. Animals that live pleasantly are probably, on the whole, happier than we; but myriads, of course, are martyred and cast temporarily to the heap. If such victims perish finally with their present bodies, the universe is, to this extent, irremediably bad. Beings exist to suffer, and promise of betterment there is none. We have done with the myth of an Absolute, in whose supreme "harmony"—never discoverable—certain philosophers put their faith. There is nothing genuinely desirable beyond the well-being of individuals. And to say that myriads of individuals fare badly is to say that the universe, in very important respects, is evil indeed.

WE MUST NOT ERECT A PSYCHOLOGICAL WALL  
BETWIXT MEN AND ANIMALS

Conscious life is the miracle. The contrasts between men and animals lie within this commanding fact.



And the contrasts themselves are not immeasurably great. Almost all the emotions which we experience seem to occur, albeit in rudimentary form, in animals. What, however, of thought? Well, the higher animals are intelligent to a marked degree. Hence Romanes has to urge that purposive thinking is the really salient peculiarity of Man. No abyss yawns, withal, between such thinking and the "receptual" thinking which subserves animal life. The *feelings* of agreement and difference, likeness and unlikeness, which base conceptual thinking are present, also, even in the practical inferences of a dog. There is no call to erect a Chinese wall between men and animals. Men are rarely Hegels and Newtons. The lowest existing races are really animals with rather big and complex brains. And bethinking ourselves of palæolithic savages, of *Pithecanthropus alalus* and his forbears, we find that all excuse for building the wall disappears.

#### THE "RIGHT" TO IMMORTALITY A FICTION

Moral claims to be "immortal" need not concern us. Of course, if the possession of good qualities conferred immortality, some animals would have an advantage over many men. The human beast, as found among inquisitors, despots, certain vivisectioners, unnatural parents, murderers, slave-exploiters, and the like, is, at his worst, a monster beyond compare. But a monster (as rival sentients style him) is as well rooted in reality as a saint.

Animals have often been denied "rights." Theologians have denied them even the "right" to persist. Now rights, in so far as they imply legality, may

not exist. The important point is that persistence involves no right. Individuals endure, not because they have rights, but because they are mights! They are forms of the self-conserving Ground which may become conscious and again sub-conscious, but which cannot pass away. The denial of "immortality" to animals founds usually on sacred books written when thought was young. These books express egoism: the crude egoism which is alive to human interests, but ignores those of subhuman sentient life. Twaddling of this sort belongs altogether to Faith.

#### SUB-INDIVIDUALS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR BIRTH

§ 9. We have glanced at various phases of struggle as it arises in the Ground and is continued in Nature and conscious life. We have now to consider it in a regard hitherto overlooked. I am recurring to the theory first advanced, I believe, in my *Riddle*.<sup>1</sup> This theory was to the effect that birth implies struggle. The Sub-individual who becomes conscious along with a physical body scores a victory. We gain a battle in the bare fact of being born.

If we consider Nature, we find that the *minor centres* altogether outnumber the centres in which semi-conscious or conscious life obtains. This much is obvious. Further, the lower centres of conscious life, or individuals proper, are vastly more numerous than the higher such as we. Thus there are over 2,000,000 animal species, "of which but a fraction have as yet been described or named. Of extinct

<sup>1</sup> P. 426 *et seq.* I have abandoned the monadology with which it was originally allied.

species the number was doubtless at least as great."<sup>1</sup> There are about 1000 species even of ants, and communities of one species may comprise 500,000 members. It is not easy to guess at what point conscious individuality dawns; but, once that an individual has appeared, he is a force which, whether conscious or sub-conscious, must persist. Lapsing at death into the sub-conscious, into what we have named the SUB-INDIVIDUAL, he tends later to reappear. There results an inevitable pressure towards rebirth—towards new bodies, the demand for which, at any time, may greatly exceed the supply. Even within *non-competing strata* of Sub-individuals the struggle would be severe. But if the Sub-individuals of a lower stratum tend, as they progress, to overflow *into a higher* (in which the bodies available at any time are relatively few), the struggle within the said higher stratum becomes acute.

### BIRTH AND STRIFE

To be is to have become, and the becoming of individuals is through a series of lives. Heraclitus urged that Strife is the father, king, and lord of all things. We may well recall the saying now. To live consciously in particular ways presupposes Birth, and Birth, too, in a particular quarter. Birth presupposes the struggle of Sub-individuals, which, alike on low and on high levels, must be severe. There is, further, the struggle between the "carriers of heredity" in the germ-plasm—a struggle big with results for the nascent body.<sup>2</sup> There is the struggle of minor

<sup>1</sup> Lubbock.

<sup>2</sup> "If every tissue-cell of the organism owes its maintenance to success in a general contest for nutriment, etc., do we not find at

sub-conscious centres in the "carriers" and the body generally. There is the struggle between the appulse from the Sub-individual and the psychical forces operative in the brain. Again, there is struggle between the contents of the new conscious being—the individual who is born—which is noted in volition, etc. Lastly, there is struggle between this individual, other individuals, and the malign influences of Nature!

THE SUB-INDIVIDUAL AS STUPID AND RUTHLESS  
AS A "NATURAL FORCE"

This struggle of Sub-individuals is, at bottom, just a pressure towards *more life*—more life of the sort of which the sub-individual already *consists*.<sup>1</sup> Anything so that life becomes more *real*—is the action. There is a fatal drift to rebirth in which alone such realisation is got. But rational prevision, such as is found in conscious willing, is absent. The sub-individual has no foreknowledge—has returned to that darkness in which one gropes, but cannot see.<sup>2</sup> Hence the insensate happenings which may attend birth: happenings which show once more that the Alogical, not Reason, is first sovereign of the world. Individuals may be remade only to perish at once. Over-multiplication spells vexation—to beast and man alike. Populations—save when controlled by prudent parents—outrun the means of subsistence. The Sub-individual, human or animal, shows the

least a probability that it owes its origin as a visible cell to a similar success in a similarly general contest among the invisible elements from which tissue-cells are developed?" (Romanes, *Examination of Weismannism*, p. 139).

<sup>1</sup> But which is got at the cost of change! (§ 1).

<sup>2</sup> Part III. Chap. I. § 11.



stupid obstinacy of a natural force.<sup>1</sup> It will become conscious even through the brain of an idiot or that of a syphilitic babe too rotten to do more than wail for some weeks and then expire. And it is as ruthless as it is stupid—being sub-conscious, wholly unaware of the miseries which it may bring to others. The mother too often dies lamentably while the conscious individual is being remade, or, speaking less accurately, reborn. The Sub-individual of the mildest, most gentle of dead men may thrust itself, torturing the while, once more into conscious being. True, it is only a part-source of the new being, but it works towards this with a fixity devoid of ruth.

#### HOW DOES THE SUB-INDIVIDUAL GET RELATED TO A NASCENT BODY?

How does the Sub-individual get in touch with what becomes a new body? Well, there seems no call to suppose difficulties here. We must never forget that all reality is psychical. And the forces that determine the drift towards rebirth are psychical also. The Sub-individual drifts whither its special kind of life is *conserved* in a more vivid and intense way. The nascent body, whatever be the attendant changes, is what *further*s it awhile the most. Symbolised in terms of mechanics, the Sub-individual moves in the line of greatest attraction and least resistance ["thwarting"], or their resultant. There must always be such accompanying resistance or thwarting. No nascent body gives just that increased life-activity

<sup>1</sup> Consult, however, Part III. Chap. IV. § 15, as regards a possible conscious factor which, in the cases of individuals who have had *many and fertile lives and are on a relatively high level of growth*, may go far to modify this basic "natural force."

which *merely continues* the Sub-individual in a conscious form. Consciousness contains the result into which the changed qualities coming from pre-natal appulse and the changed qualities coming from the new brain are fused. And when the prenatal appulse, as in lowly Sub-individuals, is weak, it is the new body which dominates in the character of the said result.

#### THE SUB-INDIVIDUAL BEHAVES JUST LIKE A MINOR CENTRE

The Sub-individual itself, considered from one point of view, always has, or rather *is*, a body (Part III. Chap. IV. § 11). And just as a minor centre, in those relations which we symbolise in chemistry, passes whither it is most furthered and least thwarted, so the Sub-individual's body (which comprises innumerable such minor centres) passes to that quarter which furthers its life most and thwarts it least. Do you say that an initial action at a distance is implied? In a sense, this is so. But anything, as we saw, must be held as, in a manner, present *wherever its influence works*. The sun is in the grass as well as in the heavens; and the nascent body is in the Sub-individual in so far as the latter, even though distant, is influenced by it. Can the activity of a nascent physical body work on a *spatially sundered* body of the sort of which the Sub-individual consists?<sup>1</sup> Why not? We know, empirically, that a conscious being can affect another conscious being who is sundered from him by thousands of miles of space. Doubtless the facts classed as "Telepathy" pre-

<sup>1</sup> For the implicated question of space, cf. Part II. Chap. IV. §§ 7 and 8.

suppose a connective medium. But a connective medium—the psychical complex of Nature—links the nascent body and the Sub-individual as well. It is no more difficult to conceive that the nascent body affects the Sub-individual's body than it is to conceive that one conscious being affects another at a distance, or that a disturbance in the sun causes a magnetic needle to move.

The nascent body, indeed, affects not only one Sub-individual, but many, whence arises the struggle for rebirth. In this strife, as on lower levels symbolised in chemistry, the Sub-individual most strongly furthered by the nascent body will win. And the more nearly it approaches the nascent body, the more markedly is its peculiar life enhanced. The final penetration (Part II. Chap. IV. § 7) of this body is the decisive fact which precedes rebirth.

This selection of a body is thus as fatal as selection in the case of a "chemical compound." It may suggest intelligent direction without compelling us to admit this.<sup>1</sup> Analogous situations, in which complex bodies unerringly select the right bodies, occur even on the physical level of Nature. Thus there are some 10,000 species of *Compositæ*. "There can be no doubt," urges a botanist, "that if the pollen of all these species could be simultaneously placed on the stigma of any one species, this one would elect with unerring certainty its own pollen." You might, of course, assume in-

<sup>1</sup> But in the case of relatively advanced Sub-individuals a *conscious factor*, as well as fatal subconscious selection, may help to determine the quarter of rebirth. Cf. the "open question" submitted in Part III. Chap. IV. § 15.

telligent direction here. But there is no need for the supposal when the facts are more easily explained.

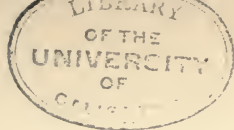
ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF PLEASURES AND PAINS  
AMONG INDIVIDUALS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR  
SUCCESSIVE LIVES.

§ 10. I must now glance briefly at a subject which I would gladly ignore—that of the *distribution*, “equitable” or other, of pleasures and pains among individuals in the course of their successive lives. The topic invites to speculation, which we shall avoid carefully. We must approach the matter as metaphysicians—must make only such statements as our grasp of the general nature of reality allows.

EXPERIENCE AS THRUST ARBITRARILY ON SENTIENTS

The form of my consciousness, as we saw, marks a compromise. There is no “reincarnating ego” linked to a body which serves idly as its “vehicle.” Consciousness and body are not separate; the body itself becoming conscious in the animal or man. Even my subtle emotional states imply organic feelings, and these latter may show benign or malign as the dark activities of the body dictate. A tumour on the pons Varolii may make a sexual maniac of me, even though my former lives were cold and austere. And, normal or abnormal, all my rememberings, imaginings, reasonings, willings—class phases of my personality as you will—implicate brain. Brain and body, again, are related, directly and indirectly, to *all other* parts of Nature. Uprising within a body, I am inevitably the heir of much more than my prenatal past!





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### SUFFERINGS ARE THRUST ARBITRARILY ON THIS OR THAT CONSCIOUS CENTRE

This consideration is capital. The Sub-individual butting its way into conscious life, faces in the result something different from what it brings. The contention applies strictly to pleasures and pains. Enjoyments and sufferings, in large part at least, are thrust arbitrarily on the individual, have no necessary "moral" connection with events in a former life. Take a concrete case: that of the great Port-Royal earthquake of 1692. Much suffering resulted to human folk. The believer in the "law" of Karma (the "law of Retribution," "Ethical Causation," or "Universal Justice," as it has been variously termed) would see here requital for misdeeds done in former lives. We require no such heroic hypothesis. The portions of the city which were built on sand and gravel were destroyed: those on the limestone, not all tenanted, we may presume, by blameless individuals, remained standing. Limestone made a lot of difference! We express the situation thus. Geologic changes—changes in the relations of the minor-centre-complexes of physical Nature—had to occur, and the misfortunes of human folk followed in their train. Animals and plants, be it noted, were affected as well. Occurrences of this kind are merely incidents in the story of cosmic strife. The Sub-individuals which succeed in penetrating new bodies run inevitable risks. Reality is not perfect, but in process of betterment, and is still in part, or, as many think, mainly, bad. Nature, working, like the primeval Ground, without morality or foreknowledge, thrusts fact hideous, insensate, absurd, into the arena of conscious life.

ORIGIN OF THE ETHICAL INVENTION OR DEVICE  
KNOWN AS THE "LAW" OF KARMA

No one can fail to notice that some sentient beings exist much more pleasantly than others; frequently, indeed, thriving at these others' expense. Emerson urges in a famous essay that a certain compensation balances every gift and defect. This, to an extent, is true; but the compensations are not such that all lives are equally desirable. The leper—console him as you will—is much worse off than the robust, cultured man of leisure. There obtain genuine inequalities in respect of happiness. This being so, aggrieved or sympathetic folk dislike the facts. They cannot think them away, so they try to devise a scheme in which these facts shall appear less grim. Now, suppose, that these folk believe in the plurality of lives. They are prone, then, to urge that the "injustices" of this or that life must, in the long run, be swept away. A suffers "unjustly" in one life, while B, an aggressive egoist, thrives far too well. There is a desire to have this scandal righted. Sooner or later, in a future life or lives, A will be rewarded, while B will be punished. Quite a Mosaic code of Retaliation is invented to stifle B—the "nemesis-side" of that "UNIVERSAL JUSTICE" which overlooks no "sin." This Karmic Law becomes a hypothetical constraining moral force—a mysterious cosmic "principle" somehow manifested in, and *productive of*, facts.<sup>1</sup> It is of the nature of a superadded belief (Part II. Chap. VI. § 6)—an invention or device *thought into* the world by

<sup>1</sup> The "laws" of science, of course, are not principles manifested in, and productive of, facts. They are generalisations which state the uniformities, likenesses, or agreements of facts. There is scope for a superb muddle when this little matter is overlooked.

certain folk who cannot tolerate facts in the grim forms in which they appear.

The device, of course, is very widely believed in and used. The law of Karma, observes Maitland, "is no less Hermetic than Hindu, the equivalent term in the former being Adraste, a goddess to whom is committed the administration of Justice. In the Greek pantheon she appears as Nemesis and Hecate. They represent that inexorable law of cause and effect in virtue of which man's nature and conditions in the future are the result of the tendencies voluntarily encouraged by him in the past and present."<sup>1</sup> We have seen that this cannot be the case; man's "nature and conditions in the future" being determined in part by himself, but, inevitably also, by much else. The ignoring of this "much else" is indefensible and, indeed, quite absurd.

#### JUSTICE IS NOT A COSMIC PRINCIPLE

Justice or Reciprocity—to each his due—is not a principle, pervasive of reality, which antedates and lies behind conscious life. It belongs to those novelties which presuppose conscious and socially related folk. In most languages, as Mill observes, it points to "something ordained by law"—law in the sense of commands enforced by authority under threat of pain. We must not forget that custom-regulated conduct obtains among rude peoples before the era of law proper begins. Still there exists no "Justice" (or, better, just habits of action) before the time when individuals, having interests, which at one point harmonise, and at another conflict, come together in a rude social life.

<sup>1</sup> *Virgin of the World.*

## AND IS NOT SUPREME EVEN IN THE MORAL WORLD

Just ways of acting are important forms of moral conduct. But even in the restricted moral world Justice is by no means supreme. The merely just man is not the most moral type of man. If it is desired to think the universe moral, it is hardly a compliment to dub it "inexorably" just.<sup>1</sup>

ON RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AS THOUGHT  
INTO THE COSMOS

Retributive human Justice reappears in the nemesis-side of the theory of Karma, as the "law of retribution." Along with it reappears an effete view of punishment. This hypothetical Cosmic Justice respects punishment as a fact excellent in itself! It punishes, also, for "ill-doing" which took place in former and *forgotten* lives—a procedure as insensate as anything well can be. A theosophist has stated that a "physical ailment" is the last expression of a past "ill-doing." Just conceive of accounting for cancer in the brain of a seven months' infant, or in mice, cattle, and dogs, on such lines! Popular versions of "reincarnation" comprise much nonsense of this sort.

## THE PROBLEM OF ANIMAL SUFFERING IS SHELVED

Acute sufferings afflict particular men. Hence the ordinary "reincarnationist" is quick to surmise the working of retributive "law." But let us recall that there are martyrs in plenty among animals. Some

<sup>1</sup> Karma has been described by a theosophical enthusiast as "the inexorable law of divine justice."



animals flourish mightily 'twixt birth and death; others, of course, are born to suffer—often most grievously—and die. It would be idle to harp on “moral deserts,” “merit and demerit,” retributive “laws of ethical causation,” and so forth in this regard.<sup>1</sup> The rat drowned in its run, the rabbit struggling in the gin, the horse roasted in a fire, the dog tortured in the laboratory, are not suffering merely because they were such or such in former lives! They suffer because Reality comprises struggle, and in that struggle they come off temporarily worst. Do you urge that Cosmic Justice will compensate the victims *somehow* during the plurality of their later lives? Given time enough, this principle, you affirm, can work wonders! But the principle, alas! is mythological. There was no morality in the primeval GROUND—there is no morality in sub-conscious Nature. It is we who, leaving Nature behind, invent morality—both that which is legally enforced and that which is optional. There existed no primordial Justice which could decree an “equitable” distribution of pleasant and painful life. Let me add that a Justice which looks on at an animal being tortured<sup>2</sup> and *then* compensates it at leisure becomes grotesque. Dreyfus cases are multiplied beyond counting! As well knock a man down and then give him a shilling.

<sup>1</sup> For the problem of animal suffering, so utterly insoluble on “karmic”—Hindu or Hermetic—lines, cf. my *Riddle*, pp. 390–1. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels in South Africa*, pp. 135–6, gives an account of various grim afflictions which harry even wild animal life.

<sup>2</sup> “The zebra, giraffe, eland, and kukama have been seen mere skeletons from decay of the teeth as well as from disease. The carnivora, too, become diseased and mangy; lions get lean and perish miserably by reason of the decay of the teeth” (Livingstone, *loc. cit.*).

“CUIQUE SUUM?”—BUT THE INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS  
ABOVE A SOIL OF NATURAL GIFTS—THE THEORY  
OF PALINGENESIS LEAVES THE BASIC RIDDLE OF  
“CHARACTER” ON OUR HANDS—A MASTERFUL  
FATE.

§ 11. Maitland's phrase “tendencies voluntarily encouraged” draws attention to activities which undoubtedly count for much. My destiny is, in part, dependent on what I consciously will.<sup>1</sup> If I will to be conscious in particular ways, I am myself *part* of the dynamic which produces my future happiness or misery. But why should I will to be conscious in this or that way at all? Well, when only one motive is present to me, I act accordingly; when conflicting motives are present, I have to deliberate, and, finally, to select (*i.e.* to become intensely conscious of) one of the motives, which then issues in act. Note, however, that the motives which come to choice are *given*. I will to make *more real*, if only in the world of imagination,<sup>2</sup> that which I *possess already*, sketchily and in the rough, in idea. By this fact hangs much which our modern mystics and theosophists are wont to overlook.

Truth to tell, the theory of palingenesis leaves the basic riddle of character on our hands. If I willed in certain ways in a former life, I may do so, other conditions equal, more readily in this life and the next. Still I must make my choice now among motives which are GIVEN. But motives in former lives were given as well. Every individual, indeed, flowers above a soil of natural endowments or gifts. A, let

<sup>1</sup> Part III. Chap. IV. § 13.

<sup>2</sup> I may will merely to *imagine* an already imagined scene more vividly.

us suppose, has had indefinitely numerous lives—resumes a history which goes back into the lowest level whereon conscious individuality obtains. Still, however far you push back his history, you always come upon these modifiable, but natural, gifts. And originally the individual arose *entirely* out of conditions which he did not make—out of that psychical abyss in which forces sub-personal, sub-rational, sub-moral, work in the dark. This is a fact of enormous significance. At the outset of his career he is not accountable for his character at all. A masterful fate took shape in him, and must overshadow the striving even of his later and fully conscious lives.

Thus the old saying "To each according to his works" invites the awkward question, "What are these works?" There is a fate not themselves which goes to make individuals what they are. And while noting this truth we shall do well to take account of another. We are prone to appraise individuals too much with reference to ourselves. Practical interests furnish the prompting. Individuals are labelled "good" and "bad" (by a community as well as by private folk) very much as they tend to further or thwart our well-being. And sometimes our moral appreciations bear us toward the grotesque. Individuals, who are evil to *us*, are supposed to be evil *in themselves*—abominations which, intrinsically bad, have no lasting place in the universe! We are trying to protect ourselves by the device of abolishing these individuals in thought! This egoism springs out of practical needs; but it finds no support in metaphysics. The devil is as well rooted in reality as the saint. Both are conscious forms of the activity of the Ground;

both are heirs of the Power from whose variety creation arose.

#### INDIVIDUALS DIFFER AT THE OUTSET OF THEIR PALINGENETIC CAREERS

The Ground has all sorts of children. It becomes conscious in butcher-birds, snakes, tigers, torturers, fiends, as well as in frogs, sheep, antelopes, sages, and saints. All forms of conscious being manifest its transformations. There are no beings merely evil, but there are many, of course, who are evil for others.

You would infer from some books that all conscious individuals begin their palingenetic careers *alike*; being "responsible" in some mysterious way for the features, "good" and "evil," which they subsequently show. But, in truth, they must originate *very unlike* one another, according as the particular parts of Nature, which become conscious in them, dictate. And the content-activities which fill such individuals during their first lives are forces which help to determine the character of their succeeding lives, and so on.

It is a truism that animal sentients differ vastly. Compare whale and eagle, sheep and panther, anaconda and dog. Sub-individuals of the animal types will rise on to higher levels as definitely unlike transformations of the Primeval Ground. A masterful Fate has unclosed itself in their pasts. Yet these pasts, quite bare of "moral deserts," go to determine their futures!

Thus we reject the religio-ethical fiction of Cosmic Justice. Justice, distributive and retributive, exists



only in the actions and ideals of conscious folk. And conscious folk have arisen in time, and do not even now constitute the entire cosmos. We have seen, too, that such folk flower only above a soil of natural gifts. A Power not themselves thrusts individuals, who differ in character at the outset, into conscious life. Even free human striving is within limits imposed by a masterful fate. Quite a cosmos of causation conspires to my making. Goodness knows what is present to my activity as well as I! A cobra, a tiger, Socrates, Attila, Newton, Napoleon—not one of these individuals is the sole source of the character which it displays. Each, withal, has its place in reality. The Ground lives transformed in all its heirs. But we humans, who are swayed by practical interests and want all reality to suit ourselves, are prone to squabble. And sometimes, when we cannot master rivals in fact, we console ourselves with the belief that reality is such that individuals obnoxious to us are inherently bad and are finally to be destroyed! This way lies sheer faith and folly.

#### “COMPENSATIONS”

§ 12. There is no *law* which the fate-shadowed palingenetic Sub-individuals struggling for rebirths have to *obey*. Law, in the legal and optional-moral meanings of the term, belongs to the conscious—to our—side of the universe. Laws, again, of the theoretic sort, such as concern men of science, are mere generalisations wherewith we *group* and *predict* appearances. They, too, are among our many inventions.

The primeval Ground does not contain "laws" of either sort. Nor is it a conscious designer of "equitable" arrangements. It is sub-conscious and, incidentally, non-moral. Hence life's anomalies, regarded from the human-moral point of view, are forbidding and hard. Weal and woe come in part arbitrarily to beings who did not originate themselves. A dark Fate overshadows our past. We may feel anxious as to what the future may bring.

But this dark non-moral Fate shapes our lots not so unsatisfactorily after all. All conscious individuals, we are agreed, must endure. And this persistence may prove eventually of priceless worth. Sentients have begun their careers in an imperfect universe. The "original sin" (not of their own making) was the appearing of conscious individuals! Suffering is fatally present in reality as they know it. On the other hand, reality is not fixed, but flows. It can change. It gives promise of betterment. The conditions which enforce suffering may vanish. Even now suffering is diminishing. It is shared, too, on the whole, not *equitably*, but pretty *equally*, so far, at least, as creatures of like grades of development are concerned. Defects, for instance, which make for inferiority are often "compensated."

Some interesting phases of compensation are noted by Emerson:<sup>1</sup> "In the animal kingdom the physiologist has observed that no creatures are favourites, but that a certain compensation balances every gift and every defect. . . . The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man. *Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess.*" And analogous com-

<sup>1</sup> Essay on "Compensation."

pensations obtain throughout Nature and history. "There is somewhat that resembles the ebb and flow of the sea, day and night, man and woman, in a single needle of the pine, in a kernel of corn, in each individual of every animal tribe. The reaction, so grand in the elements, is repeated within these small boundaries. . . . The theory of the mechanic forces is another example. What we gain in power is lost in time; and the converse. The periodic or compensating errors of the planets are another instance. The influences of soil and climate on political history are another. The cold climate invigorates; the barren soil does not breed fevers, crocodiles, tigers, or scorpions." Illustrations, indeed, crowd on the inquirer. Life is full of surprises in the way of compensations. There accrue gains from experiences which we have shunned, and losses from those which we have courted and won. There are advantages and disadvantages both in being rich and poor, famous and obscure, healthy and delicate, leisured and hard-worked, a town-dweller and a country mouse, an egoist and an altruist, a traveller and a stay-at-home, and so on. Such compensations *tend* to equalise the happiness and suffering of creatures *on like levels of development*. But there is, at most, approximation to, not attainment of, equality. And there are many forms of happiness and suffering which obviously lack compensations *here and now*. Such compensations can appear—if they are to appear at all—only in the field afforded by the plurality of lives.

Schopenhauer has urged that compensations could not always be found, *e.g.* for a moment of mortal fear. And such events as lingering deaths by torture and disease, to name no others, will occur to the reader.

What possible compensations, you may ask, could take the sting altogether out of such pasts? Well, there is no need to be terrorised by the past. If reality were fixed, the past would exist, somehow and somewhere, unimpaired. But reality is fluid, and the past exists only as transformed in the conscious and sub-conscious present. There is a memory-past, of course, but this exists optionally for each of us and, under certain conditions, might not exist at all. With the lapse of the memory-past, even an abominable experience might become a good. I will suggest an extreme case. The *intensified* conscious being of a man tortured to death may become later a source of strength. The forcefulness of the Sub-individual, which is to assert itself in other lives, may be enhanced: there may result advantage in the ensuing struggle for rebirth. It is much to be a superior *might*, and, if this advantage is not embittered by memory, the compensation may profit indeed.

It is well that all reality is not "timelessly" secure; the past being simulated, for practical and other uses, as we require. Conscious life grows out of the mud. And things nameless and detestable crawl about its stalk: legions of mean experiences, best lost even to memory.<sup>1</sup> *Il faut passer par là*. The individual passes through strange places, but does well not to glance back too freely. The redeeming and, indeed, altogether commanding fact is that he gathers force as he goes. He is rich with the transformed activity of his past—becomes a greater power both to know and to do. Truly his path out of the depths is a rough one; it is vanishing, however, behind him the while he mounts.

<sup>1</sup> Conceive a cholera attack or the squalid daily aspects of the human body timelessly present in the Absolute!



## THE METAPHYSICS OF COMPENSATION

Pleasures, we agreed, are feelings of the furtherance, pains of the hindrance or thwarting, of activity or life (Part II. Chap. V. § 7) as it wells up in individuals. Both mark intense action, and, here and now, seem departures from an equilibrium which is neutral or, it may be, only faintly pleasant.

Pleasures being feelings of furtherance, what we term healthy or normal activity tends to be pleasant. All sorts and conditions of individuals, whatever their comparative "gifts" and "defects" may be, will live satisfactorily when there is no excessive thwarting whether from the side of the minor-centre dynamic of their nervous systems or "from above."<sup>1</sup> And individuals *of one sort*, living under like circumstances, tend in this way to enjoy equal shares of well-being. Each is a limited activity with various phases. If there is great activity in respect of one phase, there is less activity in respect of others. If there is defect in some phase, there is more activity present in others. But this natural and quite non-moral distribution of well-being is liable to be marred by untoward events. And, as we saw, compensations, if they are to appear, must often do so beyond the confines of a particular life-span.

If A, one of a group of individuals, has an inferior share of well-being, there exists in himself that which tends to right the defect. Let us regard A (as before) as a will-to-live or to be conscious in particular ways;<sup>2</sup> this will to be active in such and such ways being a positive force, part of the basic dynamic which

<sup>1</sup> "From above," *cf.* Part II. Chap. VI. § 6.

<sup>2</sup> Part III. Chap. IV. § 13.

reality contains. The will-to-live being thwarted, sensational and other phases of his being will be saturated with pain. But activity, whatever conflicts it comprises, is not destroyable. And, in fact, A is the theatre of a disturbance exceptionally great. The psychical forces of which he consists pass into the Sub-individual into which he collapses totally at death. The will-to-live, which is sharpened and not abolished by the thwarting, takes shape in an *enhanced* pressure towards a suitable new body—in a corresponding advantage in that struggle between Sub-individuals which precedes birth. On the other hand, the wills-to-live of more fortunate individuals are less pronounced. A will that has been more or less satisfied is, to that extent, stilled and annulled. It is the thirsty man, not he who has drunk, who runs to the well!<sup>1</sup>

#### EMOTIONAL RELATIONS AND PALINGENESIS

The relations which one individual may have with others in the course of palingenesis furnish an alluring topic. Metaphysics has to discuss them very briefly. Empirical facts fail us. Mythology is spun too easily. We may deduce glibly, but a call for verification cannot be met.

We seem justified in urging with M'Taggart that "the emotional relations which exist between people must be highly significant of their real positions in the universe."<sup>2</sup> They are obviously significant of "real positions" here and now. And emotions, as we saw, are part of the actual dynamic which determines

<sup>1</sup> The Addendum to this chapter, which should be consulted, furnishes a more popular rendering of the principle involved.

<sup>2</sup> *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 136.

rebirth. Hence we may surmise that individuals who have intimate relations of furtherance and hindrance now will come together again, sooner or later, in other lives. The individual "will-to-live" is not indeterminate. It has a definite bent. It is a *nisus* to live in particular ways. And it makes for the renewal of "emotional relations," such as its own realisation requires. The romance of palingenesis must surpass anything of which poet or novelist has ever dreamt.

#### ACTION AND REACTION AS BETWEEN PALINGENETIC INDIVIDUALS

An additional suggestion, which will be welcome to those steeped in the tragedy of life, may be mooted. We saw that when a minor centre penetrates or invades another, it furthers, and is furthered by, or thwarts, and is thwarted by, this other. There is no one-sided relation of agent and patient, of something which works change and something in which change is worked. There is always action *and* reaction—a two-sided activity. A like relation may obtain in the course of palingenesis between more complex centres such as ours. Suppose that an individual, A, has been highly malign (thwarting) in respect of another, B. A tortures B to death for holding that the earth goes round the sun. No present reaction prejudicial to A can be traced. Is the affair now finally closed? Or is a contrary malign reaction from the side of B inevitable in a later life or lives? Of course, the relation of A and B is not so simple as that of two mutually penetrative minor centres. A and B do not actually *penetrate* one another. They are in touch only by way of the connective tissue of that complex

which we call Nature. Nevertheless, A is present in a manner wherever his influence works. And the likelihood of a later reaction from the side of B must give us pause. The individuals will come together again, we may be sure, somehow and somewhere in the course of later lives. And the psychical forces aroused in B by A's original action cannot, of course, be lost. It is only the direction of these forces which seems problematical.

A does not act directly on B, but through the connective tissue of which we have made mention. And similarly there would be no direct reaction from the side of B. Further, the reaction, unlike that which occurs in the case of penetrated minor centres, could not be immediate and might be deferred for an indefinitely long time. It might, also, be so indirect as not to involve conscious agency at all. It is the character of the disturbance aroused in B which is important. Reaction is the *obverse* of that self-conservation which is native to life. It expresses the persistence of the Ground: a persistence, fatal and non-moral, which lies at the heart of things. B may "forgive" A, but the reaction, which need not depend on B's conscious volition, has begun. The Sub-conscious, at least, knows no ruth. Working in the dark, the forces that have been evoked by A are already astir.

#### MALIGN INDIVIDUALS INCUR SPECIAL RISKS

The Ground, we agreed, has all sorts of children. And grim individuals are not evil in themselves, just because large numbers of men, to whom they are noxious, dislike them. Malign super-men are forms



of the universal life. The wolf and the tiger arise as fatally as the sheep and horse: Tamerlane and Napoleon as inevitably as Socrates and Mill.

Aggressive individuals have their peculiar joys. Their "compensations" lie in the hostile forces which they rouse—forces from whose reaction, present and posthumous, they cannot, perhaps, always escape. Noxious sentient cannot, it is true, be wrecked, once and for all, by any storms which they may have raised. They, too, must grow, despite thwarting. They are essential phases of the universe and will stand their ground. Does their calling seem favoured by fate? It would be difficult to make good such a view. These folk belong to too tempestuous regions of reality. They exult in violent joys, but they have, also, special risks and reactions to face. Their lives, too opposed to the weal of others, tend to be lonely. And the crowning defect of their qualities is that their enjoyments come first and the unpleasant reactions later. 'Twere wise, from the merely prudential point of view, to order things differently. Our pains, so far as may be, should come with the *hors d'œuvres* and our pleasures last well through dessert. Otherwise, there is a skeleton at the feast, which, for some of us, wears altogether too grim a look.

It will have been obvious that the Metaphysics of Compensation implicates the Persistence of "Force"—of that psychical activity of the Ground which is continued despite changes of form. Action and reaction as between palingenetic individuals may be one more illustration of this commanding fact.

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## ADDENDUM

ON "COMPENSATIONS" (with reference to § 12).

To recapitulate:—

We are agreed that only a portion of the conscious side of reality is moral and that there is no Cosmic "Law" of Justice which overrules the histories of individuals. "Just" ways of thinking and acting are late products of social evolution. Conscious beings originate Justice just as they do morality in general or poetry or motor-cars. Justice is one of our many excellent inventions. It is a departure from Nature answering to certain needs of social life.

## THE GROUND AND CONDUCT

The Ground which gave rise to Nature and individuals is the source of all those *natural gifts* which condition what we call "choice." Individuals are free, if at all, within very narrow limits. All the motives which prompt to action are *given*: we do but *select* this motive or group of motives when deliberation passes into action. There is a necessity within the very conditions of choice. A fatal power takes shape in the conduct of (what *we* call) "good" and "evil" individuals alike.

"Merit" and "Demerit" are terms which imply a purely human point of view.

"EQUALLY," NOT "EQUITABLY."

Nevertheless, the distribution of happiness and suffering (pleasures and pains) among conscious creatures appears, at first sight, so unsatisfactory that men grumble. "The Ground," you will say, "thrives

joyously in some of its children, 'good' and 'bad' alike, and in others, again, is martyred and incurs suffering without stint. I want to ask—do these excesses and defects tend to right themselves in the course of Palingenesis or not?" Both egoism and sympathetic interest in others prompt you to put this question. Now, is the known nature of reality such as to justify your framing an agreeable hypothesis here? You cannot hope to verify this answer fully—that is certain. But is there an answer which is not quite unworthy of notice? Well, the situation is not hopeless. True, you cannot make appeal to a moral, and, incidentally, just Universe. But there remains, withal, the hypothesis of "compensations." Although pleasures and pains are not allotted *equitably*, yet reality may be such that they are shared, in the course of palingenetic lives, pretty *equally*. This result flows not from an abstract "Law" of Justice, but from what we have already indicated as the Persistence of the Ground. What occurs may be described as an *Equalisation Process*. It works in such fashion that, in the long run and on the whole, individuals on the same levels of development fare equally well and equally amiss. The miseries of the world are, in the main, inevitable. Reality, as we know it, is imperfect. It is the *sharing* of these inevitable miseries which is the all-important matter to be explained.

An illustration may serve to make the solution previously suggested (§ 12) more clear. In electric action the "pressures" (whence E.M.F.) tend to *equalisation*, though this process is continually being defeated and restarted. Now, just as all electric "charges" and "defects" (high or low in respect of 'normal' pressure) tend to find a level somehow, if

slowly, so the conscious Centres in their palingenetic vicissitudes tend to find a "normal" level of well-being, *such as contemporaneous cosmic conditions admit of*. And just as electric equalisations may be "oscillatory," the high "pressures" becoming too low, and the low "pressures" too high, so with the conscious Centres. An "oscillatory" process of equalisation (relatively to the "normal" quantity of well-being possible at a given stage of cosmic story) may characterise their successive lives. Thus X, having suffered overmuch in one life, may enjoy a succeeding life abnormally pleasant, and so on. A further interesting possibility seems to require notice. A "good" man, one good from the social point of view, may be enjoying, withal, too pleasant a life; while a very "evil" man, socially speaking, may be suffering far too much. The Equalisation Process becomes a creditor of the "good" man, but a debtor toward the "evil" one. Certain Moralists, of course, will be shocked! But, after all, the "good" man and the "evil" man are alike sons of the GROUND. Both are evolved by forces which, in very great measure, spring from beyond themselves—forces of which neither has had any knowledge until they take form in and as himself. Both incur necessarily all compensations which the Equalisation Process can give. Both must be "compensated" for the excesses and defects of their passing pleasures and pains. The point to remark is that the fundamental source of the compensating is not "moral."

#### A DIGRESSION RESPECTING HEREDITY

I have suggested that the Centres, or rather those that are in like stages of development, tend to find a normal level of well-being, "such as contemporaneous



cosmic conditions admit of." And this latter qualification is of capital importance. Thus the well-being of individuals depends in part on the *bodies* in which they are reborn, or in which, more accurately speaking, they are *remade*. Nowadays a blind humanitarianism is actually promoting the multiplication of unfit bodies—encouraging the breeding of organisms which ought not to be allowed to exist. Consider, for instance, the folly which permits the feeble-minded both to be a burden on the community and to perpetuate their kind. It is now established, according to the Report of a Royal Commission, that fully 90 per cent. of the feeble-minded are *hereditarily* such. And the actual inmates of lunatic asylums are almost all hereditarily unsound. "The thing," as Dr Clifford Allbut observed before the Royal Commission, "can only be bred out." Exactly. There is a fundamentally stupid side to much in the world-order, and this side we must not simply tolerate but strive to mend. A sane, benevolent despotism, once supreme on this planet, would ordain sterilisation of the unfit once and for all. The weak, also, we are apt to forget, have a duty towards the strong—not to get in their way and in that of posterity.

I have indicated, for the first time, I believe, in the history of thought, the likelihood that there obtains a *Struggle for Births*. In this struggle the most forceful Sub-individuals succeed. The Devil, in the shape of rotten organisms, is the lot of the hindmost. Let there be bred, accordingly, as few rotten organisms as possible. And let us not hear from the mouths of believers in "Karma" the contention that only individuals who have "deserved" their lots can be

reborn in faulty bodies. I have said hard things about Karma already. But in the regard of bodies which compel feeble-mindedness, the contention of the Karma school becomes grotesque. No high principle of "Justice," punitive or other, could allot to individuals bodies which forbid the growth of individuality of any worth! To assign to an individual a sphere in which he must exist mutilated and incapable of progress, were folly indeed! If we accept the hypothesis of a Struggle for Births—the powers concerned being as stupid as natural forces (Part III. Chap. V. § 9)—we can understand why even faulty organisms should attract Sub-individuals. There is no intelligent direction in the business: merely blind pressure. But if you make appeal to the "Justice" hypostatized as Karma, I have to suggest that "Justice" is not only, as she is often represented, blind, but dangerously insane as well. And with this we may take leave, I think, of the hypothesis of Karma for good.

## CHAPTER VI

### ON THE CASE FOR A FINITE GOD OR GODS—THE DESIGN ARGUMENT CONSIDERED ANEW—RELIGION : A RETROSPECT AND A PROSPECT.

“Ordinary monistic idealism leaves everything intermediary out. It recognises only the extremes, as if, after the first rude face of the phenomenal world in all its particularity, nothing but the Supreme in all its perfection could be found. . . . Doesn't this show a singularly indigent imagination? Isn't this brave universe made on a richer pattern, with room in it for a long hierarchy of beings?”—WILLIAM JAMES, *Concerning Fechner*.

#### INDIVIDUALS EMERGE FROM THE SUB-CONSCIOUS

§ 1. PHILOSOPHY must found on experience. Now, no known conscious individual has a clear recollection of when and how he began. But he and other individuals, for whom he is an “eject,” can assert, on indirect but empirically based evidence, that he arose in time. And we must admit that all conscious individuals, whose reality in their own right admits of no dispute, arose, also, in time. They have emerged from the sub-conscious, and the stamp of their origin is on them still. Their lives, even now, are broken by long lapses into the sub-conscious. And it seems probable that even our clear conscious life is divided by innumerable brief gaps in which there is momentarily no sentient experience at all.

THE THEISTIC HYPOTHESIS, WHICH DENIES THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS HAVE ARISEN IN TIME, IS UNNECESSARY.

The only conscious individual who is alleged not to have arisen in time is the hypothetical being whom Theists regard as the fount and origin of things. But this being, while effectively present in the thinking of many persons, is not real in his own right—is an invention which folk, in pursuit of theoretic or sentimental satisfactions, thrust on the universe. Theism, indeed, is one of those beliefs which are added to given fact. We have considered it before (Part III. Chap. I.), and need not repeat our remarks here. Men have worked, fought, and died for it, and may continue to do so. Their devotion shows how the belief stirs their hearts, and how remarkable a working force it may become. We, of course, setting practical considerations aside, have to ask whether this Theism is true. And we have found that metaphysics can dispense with it very well. The most likely hypothesis in view is to the effect that *all* individuals alike well-up from the Sub-conscious. The Ground of appearances, prior to the evolution of Nature and finite conscious centres, had not the characteristics of personality.

#### THE GROUND NOT A FIT OBJECT OF WORSHIP

You cannot take up a sane religious attitude towards the Ground. To begin with, it is sub-personal. I may be told that Spencer's "Unknowable," which is no person, was held sufficient to excite religious sentiment. But in this case, of course, distance lent enchantment—to a name. The so-called "Unknowable" (or shall we call it the Not-very-well-



known?) might be viewed as immeasurably superior to ourselves. The fairest of faces may be hidden behind a veil! The Ground, on the contrary, falls in part within the sphere of the directly felt; Nature, so far as it is known, and individuals showing exactly what its transformations are. These appearances in Nature and individuals are of a mixed character. They comprise very much which we loathe and desire to change. The Ground manifests in the joy of the torturer, and the agony and screams of the tortured—it is present in the ravings of the idiot, the horrors of famine, the squalor and other abominations of disease and decay. It is the source of that entire struggle whence all the sufferings of conscious centres proceed; is disclosed as imperfect in innumerable ways. We do well to rate morality high, but how do the facts stand here? Nature is a transformation of the Ground; morality a departure from, and improvement on, Nature. Morality lies very near Nature at the outset. And Conduct, of course, must always take account of natural happenings. But the higher social morality, which is based on sympathy, is not learnt from Nature at all. It is a sheer break with the stage in which struggle is king and lord. It is a condemnation of reality in the form in which it has, so far, appeared. In fine, a religion of the Ground is not to be thought of seriously. We are discussing a universal activity which, at the cost of untold suffering to sentient individuals, is being improved. The universe, as it exists, is not a fit object of religious sentiment. It contains too much that is imperfect or positively bad. But we must add that a *portion* of the universe, to wit, the sphere of individuals, promises to suggest a religion such as the coldest and most critical of philosophers could greet. I shall

deal with this matter at some length in the concluding chapter.

### ON THE CASE FOR A FINITE GOD OR GODS

§ 2. The Ground is indefinitely bigger than individuals, but, in respect of the higher characteristics of personality, inferior even to ourselves. And our idealism, in so far as it presupposes this sub-conscious activity, is atheistic. I desire to state the situation quite frankly—do not try to conciliate critics by calling an impersonal, sub-rational, sub-moral activity “God.”

So far, so good. But we have seen (Part III. Chap. I. § 5) that metaphysical Atheism does not prevent us from believing in a finite evolved god or gods, and that beings quite worthy of the name may have come to *our* particular “evolution-era” mature. We must now return to this topic. And in doing so we take up once more the already discussed argument from Design (Part III. Chap. I. § 6 (c)).

### THE PHRASE “THERE IS” A GOD POINTS TO THE FINITE—IT IS A FINITE BEING IN WHOM THE PLAIN MAN BELIEVES.

The statement “there is a god” may be true. Nay, there may exist, and there probably do exist, gods. Hegel observes that the phrase “there is” points to the finite: to something which has others beside and beyond it. And our metaphysical atheism is compatible with the recognition of finites of all sorts. If I say “There is a god” (or gods), all I mean is that reality *includes* a conscious power (or powers) of an exalted kind. It is not implied that this power

is the ground of reality and all that therein is. It is implied, however, that my atheism belongs only to metaphysics and need not distress the plain man. For the latter, whatever words are put into his mouth, believes that god exists only as an exalted, modifying power; as an enduring being, immeasurably better, wiser, and more powerful than himself, whose influence in the time-process must count for much. An "eternal consciousness," a "sum-total of reality," who is everything at once and nothing in particular, who is the fount of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, truth and error alike, profits him not at all. God is the ally who strives with him to better the universe: an ally whom he regards with love, not unmixed with fear. What he wills to believe in is emphatically a finite being. But the more "perfect" this being, the better the outlook both for the plain man and the rest of the universe. Glory be to the highest! Let there be no stinting of epithets. If, then, the theologian holds that a "perfect" being must be the "sum-total of reality"—"infinite," "eternal," and so forth—the plain man readily assents. But, despite his assent, he continues to worship the original finite being. He does so, of course, because he must. To pray, or make obeisance, to a "sum-total of reality" would be quite absurd.

#### REVELATION OR "MIRACLES" MIGHT ATTEST THE REALITY OF SUCH A BEING OR BEINGS

Incidentally it is worth noting that neither revelation nor "miracles" could prove that metaphysical Atheism is false. But they might attest the reality of a finite god or gods. There may exist, of course, a superhuman or superhumans, who influence, ordinarily in secret, but at times openly, the history of mankind.



And an exalted being of this kind might be styled, in the sacred literature of some community, "god" ("There is no god but God"). Such an attitude on the part of worshippers is intelligible enough. But we here have to state that a person who works changes in individuals, and on a Nature, other than himself, is not the hypothetical "sum-total of reality" of whom some theologians treat. With respect to such superhumans, M'Taggart's remark is apposite: "There is nothing, perhaps, which should prevent us from giving the name of god to each of several beings, simultaneously existing, or to one such being, existing simultaneously with others, who equal him in wisdom and power, but not in goodness. *It may not be impossible to revert to Polytheism*, or to conceive god as striving against other persons who equal him in everything but goodness."<sup>1</sup> In short, there may exist not only exalted superhumans, but rival ones. A recent view to the effect that *all* religions are "inspired" might possibly find this consideration of use! True, the knowledge bequeathed to us by the religions seems poor beside that thought which the history of philosophy and science records. But, then, the "inspirers" may have had in view ends other than the imparting of truth! The moral, social, and political progress of mankind is not to be despised. And human well-being may not always have been considered at all. There have been important religions, like the Phœnician, which seem to have brought man more evil than good. Hence the theory that all religions are "inspired" will carry us, it would seem, rather far. Religions are in conflict and suggest rival inspirers, all of whom could not be held, from the human point of view, to be "good."

<sup>1</sup> *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 258. The italics are mine.



CORRECT INFERENCE TO A GOD (OR GODS) MIGHT BE  
AKIN TO THAT WHICH YIELDS OUR BELIEF IN  
HUMAN AND ANIMAL "EJECTS."

Is a sane theology practicable? Well, if we want to prove the reality of god in his scholastic guise, as the eternal "sum-total of reality and perfection," we are certain to waste our time. But god in this shape is useless both to the thorough philosopher and to the plain man. The live issue is as to whether a finite god (or gods) exists, and, if so, whether we can know much about him. And one conceivable line of inquiry, failing a direct revelation, is that which starts from the alleged presence of intelligent guidance, of conscious superhuman interventions, in Nature and History.

#### A TRULY "NATURAL" THEOLOGY

Hume urges excellently that "the whole of natural theology resolves itself into one simple . . . proposition that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence." Exactly. And a finite god or gods might, perhaps, be inferred correctly from such marks of *purposive* ordering as selected portions of reality present. Finite gods would be, for us, "ejects" of a superior kind. I might believe in such superior "ejects," just as I now believe in ordinary human and animal "ejects." Certain cosmic happenings might suggest these, just as the movements, etc., of animal bodies suggest those. You may urge that it will be difficult to verify belief in finite gods, but do not forget that the verification of your belief in human and animal "ejects"—or rather in conscious

centres answering to these—is not complete (Part II. Chap. III. § 8). You have no direct knowledge even of my conscious states. You infer my reality from the evidence of certain marks. And you may come to infer the reality of finite gods from the evidence of other marks: *e.g.* from the intentional arrangements and directions of activity which Nature may display. I agree, however, that these marks may not leap to your eye. The world may be guided in ways exceedingly hard to detect. Thus the purposive modification of a germ-cell might have enormously important results, but who of us, confronted with these results, could say—Lo! here is the work of a god!

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN MUST BE USED WITH  
EXTREME CAUTION—DIFFICULTIES INSEPARABLE  
FROM THE USE OF IT.

§ 3. This discussion of gods as “ejects,” which certain facts in the cosmos may suggest, invests the Design argument with special worth. But it will be difficult to show where conscious design can be traced. A further difficulty is that such design, if we have cause to believe in it, may point to a multiplicity of agents, who differ in respect of wisdom, power, and moral qualities. And even if we come to believe in a god who is supreme among the powers that influence *our part* of the cosmos, we shall still be unable to say that he is supreme in the universe.<sup>1</sup> Discussing the belief in a Supreme Being, John Stuart Mill inferred “a being of great but limited power, how or by what limited we cannot even conjecture; of

<sup>1</sup> I have said “he.” But a god (*cf.* Chap. VII.) is not necessarily a person in the meaning which we attach popularly to the term.

great and perhaps unlimited intelligence, but perhaps, also, more narrowly limited than his power."<sup>1</sup> But we are without means of verifying the hypothesis that such a person exists. And later we may incline to agree that, if there exists a supreme conscious power—a speculative hypothesis at best—this power has *become* what it is, and, further, that it lies beyond personality such as obtains in the experience of human folk.

THERE WAS NO PRIMEVAL DESIGN—BUT THERE WAS  
A GERMINAL "SYSTEM" OF REALITY.

We need not ask whether a cosmic plan or design was *Immanent* in the Ground.<sup>2</sup> We have agreed to discard the conception of "unconscious purpose." "Purpose," "plan," "scheme," "design"—these imply a conscious individual, a being who is aware of desires and aversions and can remember, expect,

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Theism.

<sup>2</sup> "Immanent" design contrasts with that design which is "contingent" to, and thrust on, things by agents external to them. The design in a watch is not native to the raw materials which go to its making: it implicates a foreign designer, and is, accordingly, "contingent." The Ground (if there was a stage when individuals and Nature did not exist) once exhausted reality. It was its own "raw material," and, if we credit it with design, we must suppose that this latter was immanent in, or native to, its content—an aspect of the "matter" of which it constituted the "form."

The old-time theological Design argument, refuted by Kant, rests on the alleged "contingency" of cosmic design. And it exhibited a conspicuous flaw. At the best it could only be held to suggest a *Noûs* disposing *given* variety according to a plan. It could not, therefore, be used to prove the existence of a creative "sum-total of reality." It presupposed a "raw material" which existed *alongside* of the source of order.

deliberate, and choose. On the other hand, there is no call to suppose that the Ground was ever *mere* chaos, an abyss of confused differences whence, if chance so decreed, a preposterous Nature and fantastic individuals might arise. SYSTEM IS ITSELF AS PRIMEVAL AS THE GROUND. We have laid stress on the important part played by Struggle. But the fecundity of Struggle presupposes this system—a germinal system which is to change into a Nature and individuals in most respects differing from itself. This germinal system may have issued from a former one, and so on. The universe in the Time-process is always becoming what it was not. Huxley said of "protoplasm" that it is continually dying in order that it may live. This is, also, our own lot (*πάντα ρεῖ*). The conscious person is always ceasing to be what he has become. This, too, on the great scale is the lot—the "contradictory" life—of the universe.

The supposal, even on idealistic lines, of a primeval chaos is gratuitous. The Ground, while sub-conscious, was yet a psychical Whole. It was the source of that very strife which sired Nature (Part III. Chap. I. § 16), and of the variety, already qualified and quantified, which came to this strife. It was the root of the tree of life, and appears again, albeit changed, in the fruit. True, the Ground did not contain late forms of reality—forms which merely unclothe from a mystical "potentiality" into "actuality." *But it was such that it passed inevitably in the time-process into these.* Each new level of appearance becomes the point of departure for another. The nature of things shows itself to have been no original chaos. It is vindicated, we may



say, by that into which eventually it becomes transformed!

We do not speak of a primeval "design," for we must not speak of the Ground as possessing that which presupposes individual life. And individual life belongs to a relatively late stage of becoming. But "design," even if we allow only for the activities of men and animals, is certainly an important phase of reality *now*. The Ground, then, is the remote source even of design. Its fecundity was such that it had to pass into this form of activity at last.

NATURE THE "BEST POSSIBLE"—BUT THIS "BEST POSSIBLE" IS NOT SUCH AS A MORAL BEING, DEVELOPED IN A LATE STAGE OF REALITY, COULD APPROVE.

Aristotle says that Nature always works for the best (*ἡ φύσις ἀεὶ ποιεῖ τῶν ἐνδεχομένων τὸ βέλτιστον*). And the Ground transformed into Nature must be allowed to produce the "best possible" results. For it works—the conditions being what they are—toward a maximum of unimpeded activity or life, which tends to become conscious. Even a minor centre lives in the lines of the greatest attraction (furtherance), of least repulsion (thwarting), or of the resultant of both. But this "best possible" Nature stands only for a low form or stage of reality. It is not such that a *moral being*, developed in a late stage of reality, can approve it.

Nature as affecting conscious individuals presents a mixture of what *we* call "evil" and "good." There is

a hideous side to the relation—a side to which the literature of pessimism and the attitudes of millions of folk who ignore literature bear abundant witness. It is idle, indeed, to ignore this side of experience. Stendhal says wittily that the only excuse for god—using the word in the theistic sense—is that he does not exist. And theists who are frank have found the difficulty unanswerably hard.<sup>1</sup> We who agree with Stendhal have no such enigma to solve. Consciousness dawns in a non-moral world which is not ordered just to greet it! The stage of reality in which conscious life shall flower richly has to be formed. And the burden of forming it lies on this novel reality which is to benefit!

The biologists' "Natural Selection" is familiar to all of us. It may be viewed as continuing that strife which began with time. It has scourged Man with scorpions. And even among the higher animals it involves "a system of terrorism from the beginning to the end," as a famous explorer tells.<sup>2</sup> It shows no partiality towards what *we* call the nobler forms of life. It fixes grim instincts, and renders destructive

<sup>1</sup> Mansel has to suppose that god is moral in a way past human comprehension; the "representation of god after the highest human morality" being insufficient to "account for" all facts. But god, if devoid of that higher morality which rests on *sympathy*, and pursuing merely some private ends of his own, is hardly a being in whom anyone could put trust! He is also—if he exists in *relation* to the world—impossibly the all-explaining, all-inclusive "sum-total of reality." He is finite.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Baker, *Wild Beasts and their Ways*, ii. 376. A grim "picture from Humboldt's gallery" is given in my *Riddle* (p. 390) of the sufferings of horses in the Orinoco basin. Mansel would have found a remarkably hideous phenomenon to "account for" here. For the diseases which assail the higher wild animals cf. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels in South Africa*, pp. 135-6.

activities, which make for suffering, pleasant. The butcher-bird is encouraged to impale mice, etc., alive on thorns; parasites multiply and torment creatures superior to themselves. Men not yet touched with sympathy, and inheriting ancestral proclivities once of use in the struggle of life, show cruel dispositions which are genuine natural gifts. A passion for cruelty characterises certain communities. This need not surprise anyone who accepts the metaphysics offered here. It was no moral power which ordained the process in which individuals arise. The passport to a place in reality is —just to succeed!

#### DOES OUR PARTICULAR PART OF THE COSMOS SHOW MARKS OF DESIGN?

§ 4. We return now to the topic of a finite god or gods. There was no design, properly so called, immanent in the Ground. But world-histories without number may have run their course before the *present* evolution-era, and, more especially, the story of this minor solar system, began. And Individuals, maturing into a finite god or gods,<sup>1</sup> may have been the fruit of such histories. A Being or beings of this sort may have helped to produce our part of reality, and may be continuing to modify it now. We must allow, at least, that the hypothesis must be considered.

Some may contend that our part of Nature bears no marks of superhuman conscious design. A Heraclitean strife, they will urge, may have compassed nebular, solar, planetary, and organic evolution, crowning the latter with the novelty of conscious life.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chap. VII., "The Destiny of Individuals."

*Novelty*: aye, but there's the rub! Conscious centres would have arisen amid process which had not prepared an adequate welcome for them! Now the questions arise: Does not our part of Nature, imperfect though it be, show marks of having been modified with set intent that it should favour the dawn and development of conscious life? Further, Does not a survey of history suggest the working of conscious supervisory powers? Hard as the lot of animals and men has been, it might, conceivably, have been far harder and far less fruitful in results. The making of a *new stage* of reality may have been considerably facilitated. Finite beings may have modified those chemical, astronomic, geologic, biologic, sociologic, etc., processes of which our small corner of existence is the theatre. They would be limited narrowly by conditions not of their own making—by the non-moral dynamic which proceeds from the Ground. But, nevertheless, they would play important parts. And, of course, they might work normally in such fashion that none of us humans could discover just when and how they act.

#### POLYTHEISM

This last consideration weighs with me in not attempting to verify the hypothesis here. A long and elaborate essay would be required. Let it suffice to suggest that many outstanding difficulties left on our hands by the old "design argument" may be explicable if we admit the agency of finite powers, all of whom, like ourselves, have arisen in time. Proof of the reality of a personal sovereign of the universe will not be obtained. But proof of the reality of a power or powers, not unworthy of the title of gods, *in respect*



of our corner of the cosmos, may be feasible. There is a combination of imperfection and of seemingly conscious purposiveness in Nature and History, as we know them, which prompts inquiry. But the imperfections are such that the wisdom, morality, and power of the hypothetical *benign* agent or agents must be strictly limited.<sup>1</sup> Nay, *malign* superhuman agents, and agents merely *indifferent* to the well-being of terrestrial creatures, may have played their part in shaping both animal and human history. If there are designs realised in animal organisms and in the relations of the races of man, these designs point by no means to a unity of origin; to diverse agents who are all working harmoniously to a common end.<sup>2</sup>

#### BIOLOGIC, ETC., "EVOLUTION" AND NATURAL CAUSES

§ 5. Something must be said now with respect to still popular talk about "evolution," biologic and later. Spencer observes that "life in all its forms has arisen by an unbroken evolution and through the instrumentality of what are called natural causes." There are two main criticisms relevant. (1) We have said enough to show that, while there may be no breaks in development regarded as a whole, there are, nevertheless, novel stages which are not merely "unfolded"

<sup>1</sup> It is not even intelligible why many things which might have been done by benign supervisory powers have been left undone. Why, for instance, had we to wait so long for the modern discoveries of anæsthetics? Here was a field for imparting enlightenment vastly more useful than the "inspiration" said to ensoul much of the overrated sacred literature of the past!

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, if we admit that animal organisms show some design, did one and the same power arm the lion to kill the antelope and make the antelope such as to be able to escape the lion?

from a mystical "potentiality" in the Ground. Reality does not merely unfold itself—it changes. And (2) "causes" may well include *conscious activities*, superhuman and other. Folk are apt to identify "natural causes" with mechanical ones. But we saw that Nature is no mechanism, but psychical throughout. All "causes" are psychical; hence conscious psychical causes are just as admissible as others. It is certain, moreover, that, once that conscious creatures have been evolved, their volitions have an influence on their bodies and through these (ordinarily) on Nature and History. The denial that "natural causes" include volitions belongs only to the attitude for which mechanics is ultimate and psychical activity epiphenomenal. And we found that thinking of this sort is absurd.

#### DESIGN AND "NATURAL SELECTION" IN BIOLOGY

§ 6. A last word respecting Natural Selection, which, in Darwin's language, is said to "give rise by graduated steps to natural races." Now, Natural Selection is only possible because organisms vary; it fixes useful variations which *come to it* and which it does not make. These variations, again, as Darwin himself pointed out, are due in a small degree only to the character of the environment, but in a high degree to the "nature of" the organisms themselves.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The nature of the conditions is of subordinate importance in comparison with the nature of the organism in determining each particular form of variation—perhaps of not more importance than the nature of the spark, by which a mass of combustible matter is ignited, has in determining the nature of the flames" (on the "Causes of Variability," *Origin of Species*, 6th edition, p. 8).

## NATURAL SELECTION DOES NOT EXCLUDE DESIGN

Natural Selection does not exclude Design. In the first place, the environment itself may disclose marks of design. But let this pass. In the second place, the "variability" of organisms is the important matter to be explained. And *aspects* of this variability may be due to purposive guidance such as we have suggested here. I say "aspects" advisedly. It is only modifying conscious powers who are in question; limited powers who divert already existent evolutionary forces into new paths; who follow, perhaps, no strict unity of plan, who are capable of making mistakes, who have to experiment (sometimes with results no better than Dinosaurs!), and who have made an imperfect job, not only of the human eye and nervous system (which is not yet stable enough for the strains it has to bear), but of the entire human body.<sup>1</sup>

Note well that existing organisms are descendants of organisms which were *not* eliminated in the struggle for existence—at any rate till reproduction had taken place. They are the result of "variations" due chiefly to "*the natures of*" *their ancestral organisms and themselves*.<sup>2</sup> Something millions of years ago "varied," its descendants "varied" likewise, and finally the result is yonder beech. Natural Selection has eliminated organisms in all directions—has scavenged the field well—but what has it done to account for this particular line of descent and this particular beech? Obviously, the all-important facts are the "variations." You may call these latter "fortuitous," but it is by no

<sup>1</sup> The "perfection" of the human body is a superstition flouted by the squalid facts inseparable from its existence, to mention nothing else.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide supra.*

means clear what you mean. If you are saying that "*the natures of*" organisms are determined by causes of which, to a great extent, you are ignorant, I agree. I suggest that these causes, when fully known, will be found to include intentional conscious activities or Design.

#### RELIGION: A RETROSPECT AND A PROSPECT

§ 7. It is time now that we came to some understanding about Religion. And the first consideration to be respected is this. We must not, like many academic thinkers, discuss the topic too abstractly. Strictly speaking, there exist, not Religion, but religions. And there will be religions, not a religion, of the future.

#### ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION TEND TO BE TOO ABSTRACT

Many definitions, more or less unsatisfactory, have been offered. We cannot base religion on emotions evoked by "an indefinite consciousness of the Unknowable" (or Not-very-well-known!) of Spencer. A veritable "Unknowable" has no standing in my consciousness. It is simply powerless to attract or repel. We cannot say with Schlegel that religion is "an inward exaltation of the soul to the Absolute." This is not only because we have no evidence that the Absolute exists outside Schlegel's head, but because the objects of religion are of such various sorts. Intellectual inventions like the Absolute serve for the religion of the class-room; they are of no worth to millions beyond its walls. We cannot agree that religion is "morality touched with emotion." It is possible to be religious and yet very immoral. And, even if mere moral doing, or, again, respect for



a hypothetical "moral order of the universe," is religion, still there are very many faiths which this definition does not include. McTaggart urges that religion is "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large." But this definition, also, is too narrow. And the conviction on which it founds seems faulty as well. There is no harmony between ourselves and the universe at large. There is at best only a portion of reality in which we can rest and find ourselves at home. The presupposition of progress is that a great deal in the universe ought not to be. Bradley conceives religion as "devotion to the one perfect object which is utterly good." This definition is too narrow as well. It would exclude philosophical religion which rests on a belief such as Mill's—a belief in a conditioned god, who is held to be not utterly good even in a moral regard.<sup>1</sup> And it ignores a horde of very live religions altogether. Another academic view, that of Max Müller, regards natural religion as founding on the intuition of the infinite as elicited by certain sublime objects. Having no intuition, save of the indefinite, I can only say that this natural religion is not mine. And it is certainly not that of numberless folk who have thrown off natural religions of their own. I do not say that it was not Max Müller's religion. He had possibly a faculty which I do not possess. I merely demur to the claim that this one kind of religion imposes itself inevitably on us all.

#### BACK TO THE ACTUAL RELIGIONS!

There is nothing for it but to go back to the actual religions and see for ourselves what they are.

<sup>1</sup> Moral good, of course, is only one kind of good.

Possibly a tolerable definition may come to us when we have had a look around. But we must not be too sanguine. An agreement in character sufficient to ground a definition may not be found.

We must set aside abstract Hegelian discussions as to what "thought" involves, whether Morality passes dialectically into Religion, and so forth. This is mere conceptual by-play. And we must question the euhemerism which supposes that there existed a primitive natural religion, sublime and undefiled. Palæolithic men such as those whose flint-weapons were found in the Somme gravels probably had crude religions of ghosts, beasts, trees, stocks and stones, many thousands of years before anything like the Assyrian, Egyptian, and old Aryan faiths dawned. And these earlier religions, we may be sure, grew mainly out of fear and greed. Any fictitious "eject" who is credited with power, who is held able to respond to overtures, who may be useful, or, at any rate, not hostile in the struggle for well-being, is worth courting. A piece of wood, if believed to harbour a conscious power, suffices. Primitive egoism must *make* allies when it cannot find them! The ally is valued only for what it can do.<sup>1</sup> The savage is religious in the process of self furtherance. Respect, withal, is not necessarily shown to the ally. A fetish-ally, as we know, may be beaten if its owner fares amiss. Even the Arcadians used to prick Pan's statue when they had bad luck in the chase. The Ainos combine religion with the need of filling the larder. "Their chief divinity seems to be the bear, who, how-

<sup>1</sup> This rude kind of appreciation recurs in many of the hymns even of the *Rig-Veda*, wherein "the sole address to the gods is, 'Here is butter, give us cows'" (Barth).

ever, is eaten as well as worshipped.”<sup>1</sup> *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*; and fear, perhaps, deified the bear. But the need of eating being paramount, the bear serves two purposes. Want of an ally may be less serious than want of food. And, after all, an ally eaten may be held to further oneself!

### RELIGION AN ATTITUDE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Religions as met with in fact are not describable as “God’s self-consciousness”—a stage in the thought of the self-thinking IDEA. They are attitudes of individuals. And the variety of these attitudes is as great as the statement leads us to expect. There are amazing contrasts to be noted. There are religions in which beings, admittedly malign, are placated by fawning, blood-sacrifice, and torture; religions in which beings called good—for the sake of prudence—are regaled in the same way. There are religions with a single god, sometimes benign, sometimes malign, as the “merits” of his worshippers dictate; religions with multiple gods of different characters and powers; and religions without any supernatural machinery or conscious gods at all. There are religions of Nature,<sup>2</sup> of the Unknowable, of the Absolute, of Morality, of Humanity, and even the State. I knew a man to whom Royalty was a religion; and there are enthusiasts who recognise no object save Love or Art. A dog finds a religion superior to that of the Ainos in his master.<sup>3</sup> Now what is the feature in respect of which

<sup>1</sup> Miss Bird in *Unbeaten Tracks*.

<sup>2</sup> Sun-worship might seem to suit some moderns in search of a creed, seeing what  $2.300.000.000$ th part of the solar radiation is estimated to do for terrestrial nature. Anyhow, the sun has better claims to be an object of a cult than the Unknowable!

<sup>3</sup> Without eating him!

these religious attitudes agree? Clearly, the academic definitions previously cited are useless.

### RELIGION DEFINED

§ 8. The word religion covers such unlike attitudes that it may seem to have not one, but many, meanings. And in practice this is the case. Among primitive folk it will hinge on self-furtherance. The religious object, whether it be ghost, stock, stone, etc., must point to a conscious power which is amenable to courting and is held to be *of possible use*. *Do ut des*. Religion dawns as one form of the instinct of self-preservation. But the beginnings of things are humble. And religion, like all else, changes. It comes to show endless forms—forms of the most diverse sorts, such as we were mentioning just now. It has no necessary connection with morality, with belief in a god or gods—it may be egoistic or altruistic or neither; it may even be atheistic and reck of nothing beyond human weal. Bearing such facts in mind, we may, perhaps, define it, not unsatisfactorily, as follows:—

Religion is devotion to an object (or objects) which is (or are)—

(1) Not held to be “perfect,” or “utterly good,”<sup>1</sup> not even considered in such a light, but which is supposed able to further *my* greatest good; *e.g.*, the cult of a fetish who may better my individual hunting, or of Vedic gods who may give me cows.

(2) Believed able to further the greatest good of me, and of my family, clan, tribe, or race. If success in war, agriculture, etc., can be obtained, the “perfection” of the god or gods worshipped matters little.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bradley's definition.



Flattery, indeed, may label the god perfect. But the prime consideration is that the divinity shall be benign *to us*, and a thoroughly efficient ally. The Jewish god who took pleasure in sacrifices and burnt-offerings and ordered the massacre of women and children in war;<sup>1</sup> the Moloch who had to be propitiated by torture: gods of this kind are "objects" whose perfections are far to seek. But they were worshipped, nevertheless, as valuable allies.

(3) Conceived, if only verbally, as a conscious being who is perfectly good and, incidentally, as my and others' good or intimately related to it; *e.g.*, a theistic "sum-total of all perfection," omnipotent, omniscient, all-holy.

(4) Conceived as a conscious being, not perfect, but still very good, in respect of moral and other excellences; *e.g.*, Mill's conditioned deity. Such a being may be treated as far superior to ourselves, and incidentally as related to our greatest good.

(5) Conceived, not as a conscious personal being, but as the harmony which includes all goods or excellences; *e.g.*, the religion of Absolutism.

(6) Conceived, not as a conscious personal being, nor necessarily as perfect nor even at present as very good, but as affording the field in which the greatest good must be sought, and, when not found, achieved: *e.g.*, the religion of "Humanity," which latter is not a personality in its own right, but an aggregate of sentiments variously related (altruistic sentiment, if not action, is implied); *e.g.* the religion of Art, into

<sup>1</sup> Distance lends enchantment to gods as well as landscapes. Who realises, in Laing's words, that "the atmosphere of Solomon's temple must have been that of a sickening slaughter-house, and the fumes of incense could alone enable the priests and worshippers to support it"?

which, however, many of its votaries would allow no moral considerations whatever to intrude.

(7) Conceived, not as *a* conscious being, but as individuals in peculiarly intimate relations, not now attained, but foreshadowed as the goal of our present striving. This object is in the process of being made, and is neither perfect nor likely to become so. But it may become very good, with, it would seem, every prospect of growing, in an endless progress, still better. The possibility of such a stage of reality will be discussed in the next chapter. Such an object, if it is to exist in fact as well as in belief, will embody the closest approximation to perfection of which the universe admits. And it will be nothing aloof from the individual, but present to the experience in which he lives, moves, and has his being.

#### THE FAITH-RELIGIONS VIEWED AS PRACTICAL FORCES

§ 9. The intellectual side of a religion is not necessarily the source of its worth, which may be dominantly sentimental and practical. Some religions, *e.g.* Southern Buddhism, profess to make appeal largely to intellect, and can be appraised, in great measure, according to standards such as are furnished by philosophy. A Plato or a Hegel might have discussed metaphysics with Buddha. But the most intellectually excellent religion is not necessarily the most useful in respect of all stages of human progress. Rationalists have been very prone to overlook this important fact.

The faith-religionist is apt to mistake one kind of reality—that of his private cosmos of ideas, emotions,

and ejects—for another. His intellectual equipment may be extremely limited,<sup>1</sup> but, nevertheless, he may swell the great forces that move the world. The rationalist may object that his gods, heavens, hells, etc., do not exist. And certainly these may not exist in their own right. But they exist as emotion-saturated phrases and images in believers' heads, and, lodged there, they issue in very important results. Thus the derided German "paganism" inspired barbarians with much of the spirit and resolution which launched them against imperial Rome. Thus a naïve Christianity, espoused by Clovis and his followers, proved a unifying social and political force of great value to the Western world. We urged once before that perhaps the most potent figures in history have been persons who never lived. And if we recall the number of temples, rituals, and observances which, from time immemorial, have grown up in the service of non-existent beings, and, further, the vast moral, social, and political changes which belief in these beings has helped to produce, we shall agree, I think, that the statement is hardly too strong.

A faith which, tested by the standards of science or philosophy, is poor, may support a mass of beliefs and commands which serve to console, to moralise, and to sustain virility in the battles of life. Men cannot be "thinkers" at all stages of history. And the evolution of character and precious habits of action are often of more immediate value than the evolution of thought.

<sup>1</sup> The Parsees of India did not even know the meaning of their "sacred literature" till 1859, when Europeans revealed to them what their language of worship stood for !

## CHRISTIANITY

Christianity at the outset was not an intellectual religion. Its best service has lain in the quickening of the growth of altruistic morality: a growth inevitable in any case as human sympathies, whose rise is in no way mysterious (Part III., Chap. III. § 8), grew in force. It associated positive beneficence with its faith-world, furthering thereby an advance which "pagan" morality had already decreed. But this forcing of a virtue was not realised at a stroke, and the price paid for the triumph has been exceedingly high.

This consideration of price brings us to note that none of the great religions are excellent throughout. Some, perhaps, have been dominantly noxious. Rawlinson thinks that the "aggregate results" of the Phœnician religion on the morals of the race were injurious.<sup>1</sup> Macaulay observes of Brahmanism that "in no part of the world has a religion existed more unfavourable to the moral and intellectual health of our race." Buddhism, again, strictly followed out, discourages progress, teaching a pessimism which is untrue, for the most part, to fact, and which tends to depress folk not specially virile and strong. Activity is an excellence, not a defect. Mohammedanism blocks progress in many ways. It fetters the individual, while its value for altruistic morality seems slight. And Christianity, of course, has a very dark side. Monstrous religious persecutions stand to its discredit for all time. And such for long was the dishonesty, the jargon, the intolerance with which it opposed intellectual progress that, in Lecky's words, "few

<sup>1</sup> *Phœnicia*, p. 37.



men who were not either priests or monks would not have preferred to live in the best days of the Athenian or the Roman republics, in the age of Augustus, or in the age of the Antonines, rather than in any period that elapsed between the triumph of Christianity and the fourteenth century."<sup>1</sup> Further, Christianity sought to mar *personal* morality with an ethic of absurd asceticism and restraint. Is it surprising that some radicals have condemned this religion outright?

Still, a fair estimate of Christianity must, I think, allow this. It has done much to soften hearts—to modify those conditions in which strife was too much in view. Positive beneficence, a virtue for which even a Plato had no eye, has made headway. There is much inconsistent with it in Christian history, and even in the original Christian attitude and teachings.<sup>2</sup> But the leaven of charity was genuine, and it has now made its importance felt. On the whole, we must rejoice that altruism stands where it does. A quickening of the sympathies has been accomplished, though how much of this is due to the better part of Christian teaching and how much to concurring extra-religious causes it is impracticable to say. There can be no *absolute* principle whose categorical imperative is "Live for others" (Part III. Chap. III. § 9), but he who fulfils his basic duty towards self will incline henceforth to live, in some measure, for others as well.

<sup>1</sup> *History of European Morals*, ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Where is the sincerity of describing Christianity as working only through love, when so much of the teaching attributed in the New Testament to the Founder breathes a spirit of intolerance, persecution, and vindictiveness?" (G. S. Carr in *Social Evolution and the Evolution of Socialism*).

## THE PASSING OF FAITH

§ 10. The "intellectual" need not be uneasy, for, after all, time is on his side. The faith-worlds are not immune from change. Contrariwise, they are ceaselessly modified by the pressure of reality at large. The race cannot permanently mistake inward reality for that wider reality which philosophy is interested to discuss (Part I. Chap. I. § 2). And, in truth, impatience of the faith-world—that nascent scepticism which precedes enlightenment — begins early. Even in the Vedic days there were those who disbelieved in Indra; and the Vikings, in the heyday of their faith, were said to put more trust in themselves than in Wodan and Thor. The sceptic is always in evidence; the final triumph of the philosopher is always assured. Man the thinker is only an extension of the Man who perceives stones and trees. He is forced slowly to become aware of the nature of reality at large, to surmise how it has become, and to speculate on what it will probably be. And, in obeying this impulse, he is an "intellectual"; but, since an "intellectual" must welcome all fact relevant to his purpose, he will agree that the faith-worlds play important, if transient, parts in the sublime drama of the universe.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DESTINY OF INDIVIDUALS

"It is no longer *they*. There is no *they*! That is only a detail. . . . Nothing is lost—nothing. From the ineffable, high, fleeting thought a Shakespeare can't find words to express, to the slightest sensation of an earthworm—nothing! Not a leaf's feeling of the light, not a loadstone's sense of the pole, not a single volcanic or electric thrill of the mother earth."—GEORGE DU MAURIER in *Peter Ibbetson*.

"Privacy is ignorance."—ROYCE, cited by WILLIAM JAMES in *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 183.

### THE DISCUSSION ADMITTEDLY SPECULATIVE

§ 1. WE have come to know something about the place of human and animal individuals in the universe. And we are agreed that they arose in time from the sub-conscious, and are now psychical forces—not "egos"—which, periodically dark, tend always to repass into conscious life. We have now to consider what the destiny of these individuals will be. Must the conscious side of reality always consist of beings who exist in *all but* closed circles? Or is there a likelihood that these circles will become more and more open, and ultimately so pervious that their original, but never quite complete, isolation will disappear? Of course, such a discussion is speculative, seeing that our answer cannot be verified in fact. But we have got to know so much about reality that we shall strive to deduce something more. An issue

of enormous importance, even for practice, is involved. We are discussing process which may result<sup>1</sup> in the evolution of gods—nay, even of a supreme god!

Observe that we have reached that speculative extreme which was indicated during our discussion of Method. A provisional solipsism was the starting-point. "Appearances appear" was the certain truth with which I opened this inquiry. I have since proffered a variety of statements—some certainly true, others very probably or probably true, and others, again, which are speculative in various degrees. I had to work outwards from appearances of which I am aware into that larger reality which is not present to me directly at all. Now this procedure can be made very safe. One can work outwards just as cautiously as may be desired. One can certainly arrive at a variety of unimpeachable truths. And when one suspects that certain and probable truths are being supplemented by speculation pure and simple, one can stop. Peradventure *you* will prefer to stop at the point reached at the close of Part II. of this work. You may be right. I will not dictate to readers, whose judgment may be better than mine. Personally, I shall push inquiry as far as I can contrive to stagger on. Knowing somewhat about reality, I believe that we may contrive to deduce something more. I recognise the possibility of error, but am content to take the risk.

IS DISCRETE OR "INSULATED" INDIVIDUALITY SUCH  
AS CHARACTERISES A MAN OR AN ANIMAL THE  
HIGHEST FORM OF CONSCIOUS LIFE?

§ 2. So far we have had human and animal  
sentients principally in view. And we recognised

<sup>1</sup> And may have already done so!



fully how important such sentient are. Thus Meliorism has to take account of them all. Conscious lives are the tribunals before which reality is to be approved or condemned. The universe, if it makes for the eventual well-being of all sentient, is, at least, "potentially" good. But if it is to comprise a single genuine victim, however humble, it is, *to that extent*, disclosed as hopelessly bad.

THERE MAY EXIST SUPERHUMAN POWERS, OR OVER-INDIVIDUALS, WHO ARE NOT PERSONS IN THE CUSTOMARY MEANING OF THE TERM.

Still, it would be folly to urge that sentient of the familiar terrestrial types exhaust the field of conscious life. There may exist innumerable subhuman and superhuman beings—beings who are relatively impervious to one another and to us. But beside such discrete insulated beings, existing in all but "closed circles," there may obtain others who are mutually pervious; who do not know of one another merely from the outside, but share at will an experience more or less common to all. Such groups and "societies" of superhumans—such Over-individuals, as we shall call them—may well stand towards some minor cosmic system in the relation of gods. Each member of such a group or society may have arisen palinogenetically from the very humblest levels. His special past brings its peculiar wealth into that collective wisdom which makes the Over-individual great. He is in complete touch with a vast community of developed sentient, sinking at will, withal, into a more restricted experience if he so desires.

## ON THE EVOLUTION OF GOD

§ 3. We saw that the "imperviousness" of human individuals is a consequence merely of this—that Nature is not *entirely* conscious. One conscious human is "insulated" from another by the sub-conscious (Part III. Chap. III. § 3). Were the sub-conscious tracts to become somewhat livened, individuals would exclude one another less sharply. What have been called "telepathic" relations would multiply. Were the tracts in great measure abolished, individuals would overflow into one another—in a word, would meet.

## OVER-INDIVIDUALS AND THE SUPREME GOD

If now there are regions of reality in which palingenetic individuals, hitherto parted by the sub-conscious, meet, there results a composite Power, the total voice or harmony of the intimately related individuals. Such composite superhumans, Over-individuals, or "coalesced existences," as Sir Edwin Arnold termed them,<sup>1</sup> may well obtain. And these Over-individuals, also kept apart from one another by the sub-conscious, may come later, in their turn, to

<sup>1</sup> "As immensely higher and better than our little 'ego' as that of the tree is than those of the cells which build every inch of it" (Sir Edwin Arnold, *Death and Afterwards*). I must not be supposed, however, to maintain any Eastern view to the effect that the individual can be "merged" finally in something "superior." The Over-individuals, I take it, do not *replace* individuals: are just *societies* of individuals who are related in extremely intimate ways. They are spheres in which individuals expand, not gulfs in which they disappear. There is no call for mystics or philosophers to belittle individuals, since these, however much they may be in need of growth, are, after all, the most important facts in the universe!

meet, passing into an Over-individual superior to, yet inclusive of, themselves. These Over-individuals, again, may pass into other Over-individuals, and so on. The final result may be the evolution of a supreme god!

We are speaking, for convenience, as if a supreme god did not as yet exist. But he exists, perhaps, even now—not “perfect,” nor ever likely to be such, but immeasurably superior to any conscious agent whom we can imagine in a concrete way: a veritably divine, though not omnipotent, being, in whom myriads of individuals, the heirs of evolution-eras without number, are blent.

KRAUSE AND RENAN ON “UNIVERSAL UNION” AND  
ON THE GOD-WHO-IS-TO-BE

The god, to whom Over-individuals give rise, marks that “UNIVERSAL UNION,” always being achieved, but never finally achieved, of which Krause used to write. A kindred conception is voiced by Renan: “We imagine a state in which everything would terminate alike in a sole conscious centre . . . in which the idea of a personal deity would be a truth. A being omniscient (?) and omnipotent (?) might be the last term of the deific evolution, whether we conceive him as rejoicing in all (all also rejoicing in him) according to the dream of the Christian mysticism, or as an individuality acquiring a supreme strength, *or as the outcome of tens of thousands of beings—as the harmony, the total voice of the universe.* The universe would be thus consummated in a single organised being in whose infinity (?) would be gathered

up millions and millions of lives, past and present, at the same time."

Krause, who believes strongly in the plurality of lives, urges that the highest destiny of the individual is not to cling to his petty discrete existence, but to "rise into union *with others*, finally *with God*." And a literary man, not uninfluenced by philosophy, voices the same thought gracefully and in a religious spirit as follows:—

"So who shall say where Shakespeare and you and I come in—tiny links in an endless chain, so tiny that even Shakespeare is no bigger than we! And just a little way behind us those little wriggling, transparent things, all stomach, that we descend from, and far ahead of ourselves, but in the direct line of a long descent from us, an ever-growing conscious Power, so strong, so glad, so simple, so wise, so mild, and so beneficent, that what can we do, even now, but fall on our knees with our foreheads in the dust, and our hearts brimful of wonder, hope, and love, and tender shivering awe and worship of a yet unborn, barely conceived, and scarce begotten Child—that which we have been always taught to worship as a Father—that which is not now, but is to be<sup>1</sup>—that which we shall all share in and be part and parcel of in the dim future—that which is slowly, surely, painfully weaving itself out of us and the likes of us all through the limitless Universe, and whose coming we can but faintly foretell by the casting of its shadows on our own slowly, surely, painfully awakening souls!"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We cannot say this, for god, though developed in time, comes, perhaps, to *our* world-order mature.

<sup>2</sup> George Du Maurier in his remarkable romance, *Peter Ibbetson*.



GOD, A VERITABLY CONSCIOUS POWER, IS NEITHER  
OMNIPOTENT NOR OMNISCIENT

§ 4. Strauss and others connected with the Hegelian Left have argued similarly that god results from the "eternal movement" of the universal, which is ceaselessly becoming conscious. But their god, who lives only in *discrete* individuals and not consciously in his own right, exists only in name. Our deity exists, or will exist, for itself as the "crowning ideal of our endeavours, as a being in whose making we are now playing our parts."<sup>1</sup> A conscious society, not an abstraction, is in question; a composite power concrete in all respects, who is born from the approximation of discrete lives.

God, in respect of his origin, is (what Hegel called his Absolute) "essentially result." The GROUND, whose *ἀνάγκη θεία* sired Nature and individual life, rises in its highest conscious transformation into god. And this god, the supreme society of Over-individuals, is, of course, not omnipotent. He is not, and will never be, the universal day which replaces primeval night. (1) There will always be over against him conscious individuals and the residual dark abyss of the Ground. His activity confronts *other* reality which it modifies, but does not create. And he cannot bring a solitary force, conscious or sub-conscious, utterly to naught. All exists, at bottom, as securely and fatally as he. (2) God himself, the modifying power, issues from conditions which he did not make. His character—his content—is determined *in part* by a dynamic "from below": *e.g.*, he cannot, and he would, compass suicide; cannot be inactive; is unable,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Riddle*, p. 371.

because he lives happily, to adjudge reality entirely bad.<sup>1</sup> There is an overruling fate which concurs with the very freedom which he enjoys.

Those who find their part of reality bad, and exclaim, with a famous cynic, that "god does nothing," speak, perhaps, too hastily. Both god and some of the minor gods may be doing much, but they have over against them the residual activities, conscious and sub-conscious, hostile and indifferent, of the universe. The wisest, most powerful, and most moral power yet evolved may seldom be able to shape events quite as it lists. A supreme power—if such there be—may stand to the worlds much as did the brain of the Stegosaur—a brain no larger than a pigeon's egg—to its vast and unwieldy Dinosaurian body. The brain guides the actions of a huge, unintelligent body as best it can, but power to do more is lacking. Uncontrolled by the brain, the body would fare woefully ill; controlled, it fares better, but, nevertheless, diseases, accidents, and all manner of dangers and serious mishaps may be its portion.

#### GOD NOT OMNISCIENT, REALITY BEING WIDER THAN CONSCIOUS LIFE

It is implied by what has been said that god, a society, is not omniscient; *e.g.*, the Ground, to an

<sup>1</sup> His beneficence would appear equally assured. God is no mere spectator who stands to gain or lose nothing in the process of the suns. His beneficence *to others* implies the forwarding of *his own* life. The ocean is enriched by all rivers that go to swell it. Every Over-individual must bring wealth to the supreme society. Not one can come empty-handed. And, of course, the richer the contribution the better for the Over-individual, and the better, let us add, for the divine life!

indefinite extent, falls outside conscious life, divine or other. Knowledge "about" the Ground is a makeshift. Reality is known genuinely only when it is directly felt—*i.e.*, when it takes shape as sentient experience. The sentient experience even of god has limits—cannot *exhaust* reality, of which, peradventure, it is the highest form. Nay, god's knowledge is limited in another way. He is not a static personality, but is developed in time. He does not know and will now all that he is to know and will anon. His *future* experience is not somehow and somewhere in actual being. It is anticipated by him, if at all, only in idea. And the expectation, at best incomplete, may be positively erroneous in part. God, too, we may say, has to live and learn. Conscious factors other than himself help to fashion his future. Some, at least, of these factors, *e.g.* ourselves, are "free," the direction of their activity not being predictable in full. Natural change, again, has its great surprises. Appearances entirely novel, hence quite unpredictable, issue constantly from the womb of Time.

We must agree, then, that omniscience can be no quality of a god who emerges out of the Ground and in time.

#### OMNISCIENCE WOULD BE A DEFECT

Omniscience, however, would be a most questionable excellence. Past and present sentient experience contains much which no divine being would treasure for aye. Very much of it is not worth preservation, even in idea. Are the squalid details of animal life on this planet, the agonies of a *Jardin des Supplices*,

the abominations of decay and disease, etc., all indelibly present to god? Are they eternally secure phases of an experience which desires the best? Or is god, like us, able to prefer and select? He is impossibly omniscient. But would not perfect memory even of a limited past be a burden quite too intolerable to be borne?

God may well strive to thrust into the sub-conscious innumerable appearances which mar his life. Instead of desiring to know everything, he may desire to forget very much. If the betterment of his being demands it, he may have to suppress memories on a great scale. The rejected of god sinks back into the abyss of the Ground.

#### GOD IS NOT INFINITE

§ 5. The foregoing deductions imply that god is not "infinite." This courtesy-title is sometimes given by worshippers to a deity who admittedly does not exhaust reality, flattery being cheap and inconvenient objections being quashed by faith. I need hardly repeat that a veritably "infinite" god is not wanted by the plain man. The latter desires, and is ready to adore, a potent *ally*, not a sum-total of reality which is nothing in particular, and comprises good, evil, and indifferent existence alike.

#### GOD IS (OR WILL BE) HAPPY

§ 6. Happiness is an aspect or accompaniment of unimpeded activity or life. The more life—life which is not thwarted by other life—the more happiness. Reality tends to become more happy as struggle, which was originally lord, is overcome.



## PESSIMISM

The conditions of present human existence are such as to render pessimism at least plausible. Here and now, for instance, "Massive pleasure can seldom or never attain the intensity of massive pain, because the organism can be brought down to almost any point of inanition or exhaustion, but in efficient working cannot be raised very high above the average. Similarly, any special organ or plexus of nerves can undergo any amount of violent disruption or wasting away, giving rise to extremely acute pains; but organs are very seldom so highly nurtured and so long deprived of their appropriate stimulation as to give rise to very acute pleasure."<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer points out how poor is the list of pleasures of Dante's *Paradise* compared with that of the pains of the *Inferno*. The poet could only imagine on the basis of what we terrestrials experience here and now. Now it is quite arguable that the conditions of terrestrial life make for the *temporary* predominance of pain. The struggle issuing from the primeval Ground is still too severe for the free development of individual life.

AN *A PRIORI* PESSIMISM ABSURD

But an *a priori* pessimism which asserts that conscious activity must always and under all conditions be painful—that pleasure is merely relief from, or the negation of, pain—is quite absurd. The swallows which flit above yon lake, the fox-terrier bounding through the grass, the healthy man glowing with joy on the mountain, are positively happy. They

<sup>1</sup> Grant Allen, *Physiological Aesthetics*, p. 107.

show how joyful conscious life, when conditions favour it, can be; their experience condemns the pessimism of the study outright. They are fatally happy, so long as they and the [cerebral] minor centres allied with them are active without thwarting. Their realisation of desire is dominantly pleasant throughout. And even when they are not willing, but merely receiving experience as it comes, their consciousness may be pleasant still. The theory that pain is alone positive is a creation of the study, at variance with a thousand experiences of workaday life. A ride on a motor-car, a climb in the higher Alps, a lounge in the sunshine, dissipate it at once.

#### ON SOME UTILITIES OF PAIN

Painful living in itself is bad. And much pain no doubt belongs to a universe which is imperfect and has to be improved, showing stages large portions of which will be well lost to view. On the other hand, painful life subserves many excellences. Failing pain, the rich emotional nature of man would not have emerged—a psychological scarecrow would confront us! And, while happiness too often favours stagnation or worse, pain, when not too excessive, may stimulate advance! Hence the observations: "The first lesson of History is the good of Evil";<sup>1</sup> "The swiftest horse that bears us to perfection is suffering";<sup>2</sup> "Imperfection is perfection in its becoming"<sup>3</sup>—statements which are by no means unreservedly true,<sup>4</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> Emerson.

<sup>2</sup> Eckhart.

<sup>3</sup> Schelling.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.*, what possible good is there in the evil that 40,000,000 Indian ryots (my authority is the late Sir W. Hunter) never know what it is to have a full stomach? There is no magic in a Struggle which is too severe for the organic individuals who have

which serve to emphasise the *frequent* utility of pain. Had the ancient inhabitants of the Nile Valley, suggests Winwood Reade, always had food in plenty, no civilised Egypt would have arisen! A too genial climate, with a too bountiful vegetation, may prevent a race from entering the stream of history, while the staving off of foreign competition has been known to render a branch of production a "conspicuous example to the general industrial energy" even of England.<sup>1</sup> An easing of the struggle for well-being may have disastrous effects on social habits and conduce to degeneration. The promptings of fear led to ghost-worship and fetichism, heralding other religious growths, many of untold practical service to mankind. "Necessity is the mother of invention"—of the useful arts and sciences which emerge, in no "logical" succession, but slowly, in the order of urgency in which they are *wanted*. The pains of *ennui* and perplexity, tempered by wonder, gave the first impulse to philosophy. *Vexatio dat intellectum*! Most great men have undergone unpleasant struggles at the outset. Initial ease, economic and other, too often dulls effort. The habit of voluntarily incurring pain, which is invaluable, is not easily acquired. Many great aims cannot be realised unless the worker, alike in the domains of theory and practice, is prepared to suffer. An eminent Viennese mathematician, I was informed, attributes his success mainly to his power of enduring pain. The writing of a system of philosophy, by one who loathes the pen and the study,

to undergo it. Progress—mental, moral, and physical—is barred! Emerson—who is given to making too sweeping generalisations—might be further asked to show what good ensouls the evil of the hundreds of thousands of lepers who infest India and China!

<sup>1</sup> Mill, chapter on "Monopolies," *Pol. Econ.*

may be little less than prolonged torture. It is regrettable, perhaps, that such work should involve pain, because few will be prepared to incur suffering of set intent. Those, however, who have to face the ordeal will be greatly bettered by a preliminary discipline of pain. We live in an imperfect universe, and have to make the best of it. Hence a Spartan training has advantages not to be despised.

To endure pain to no profit would be folly. On the supposition, already discussed, that individuals perish in time, a great deal of the pain which we humans voluntarily incur is ridiculous. A *mortal* mankind would do well to relax the intensity of its striving—and enjoy! But, if things eventually are to turn out well, we can welcome even considerable pain at times.

### WHY GOD IS FATALLY HAPPY

The coalescence of Over-individuals in a supreme being would realise a blessedness compared with which the traditional heavens are tame. The pains of life would have been worth enduring. God will be fatally happy—he *will hold the conditions of his being very largely within himself*—will not be “thwarted,” as we are, by such vast numbers of *uncontrollable* activities other than, and hostile to, us. The most fortunate of men is at the mercy of changes in his body, which he has little power to modify. He is a struggler almost lost amid the colossal natural forces which compass him about. And he has to elbow his way through rival sentient to a “feast” which consists largely of scraps.



EVIL AS A FACTOR WHICH MAY ENHANCE THE  
DIVINE GOOD

Leibnitz compared god to the artist who "employs discoloured shades or discordant sounds to heighten the colouring or the harmony of the work of art, so that it gains in beauty through what is itself hideous." But we have to urge that god, being in point of origin a result, did not "employ" evil as a means to heighten the final pleasant consummation of life. The evil, which preceded his rise, had its source in struggle—struggle which continued process native to the sub-conscious GROUND. Still, the constitutive force of contrast is not to be overlooked. And it may well be that the "divine event," toward which creation moves, will be the more glorious and the richer for the undesigned painfulness of the struggle which has led up to it. The memory of the past—in so far as it is tolerated at all—might throw the splendour of the event into relief. A man who becomes prosperous reaps more enjoyment than he who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

## GOD AS A MORAL SANCTION

§ 7. We pointed out (Part III. Chap. III. § 10) that the current utility-morality lacks an adequate sanction. It cannot impose its "greatest good of the greatest number" on men of a certain temperament. It cannot enjoin all folk to live for others without provoking mirth. Further, it cannot point to a *genuine*<sup>1</sup> self-sacrifice which has not a vicious element in it—the

<sup>1</sup> This is important. Much altruism involves no genuine mutilation of the individual at all, but is pleasant and subserves his realisation (*cf.* Part III. Chap. III. § 10 *et seq.*).

mutilation of an individual, which is in itself a bad thing.

#### THE "UNIVERSAL UNION" ONCE MORE

If, however, individuals are to meet, albeit at some very remote date, in a supreme society, there exists a new moral sanction of a commanding sort. Am I an egoist whom the utilitarian, disdainful of metaphysics, cannot move? Well, I have now in view a very important end of conduct. I have inferred that "the greatest good of the greatest number" is to become in the distant future my good as well. My interests are bound up with those of mankind. Present sacrifices of mine will not be useless to me: the vicious element in self-sacrifice will be annulled.

#### EGOISM V. ALTRUISM ONCE MORE

When discussing egoism and altruism we agreed that living for self and living for others may alike be excellent. The main difficulty was to know how to blend these attitudes aright—to what extent to live for oneself and to what extent for others.

#### AN ART OF MORALITY IMPRACTICABLE — BUT AN IMPORTANT "REGULATIVE" IDEAL CAN BE SUGGESTED.

We cannot even now proffer an art of morality which is to solve all doubts which must arise in practice in advance. But we can say: Act, not unregardful of a state in which egoism and altruism as such will finally disappear. You are called an egoist when you have worked for reality *which is to flower*

*within yourself.* Well, this egoism may have been moral. You must improve your own garden as well as the estates of other folk. And in pursuing primarily egoistic ends you may have developed qualities intrinsically good. The universe has been bettered in so far as it contains your excellences. Your ego-altruistic activities, again, have bettered, perhaps, both you and others; your altruistic, which have involved real sacrifices, others only. There has been a gain somewhere always. And now you surmise that the gains will coalesce into a common fund. Act, then, *henceforth* in respect of yourself and others, with this idea of a final divine harmony in view. Let your self-seeking be transformed by the thought that in the long run "self" and "others" may blend. A merely aggressive and destructive egoism receives a rude check. YOU will be the heir of the ages. And YOU will share your heritage with those temporarily "insulated" rival sentients who are voyaging through this night of time.

A VITAL QUESTION—WILL "UNION" REALLY BE  
"UNIVERSAL"?

We have been supposing that a "universal union," as Krause puts it, of Centres is in process (never completed) of being attained. But all individuals may not regard the union as desirable. There are those who may prefer an insulated, discrete life, despite its narrowness. Either individuals or composite Over-individuals may make particularism their ideal. Now, we cannot aver dogmatically that particularism would be intrinsically bad. It might have its peculiar compensatory joys. In this case it would be more or less good. But if it were to entail experience intolerable

to the particularists themselves, it would certainly be intrinsically bad. And, being this, it would, like all other evil, eventually change its character and come to an end.

Belief in the "divine event" cannot sway the conduct of those who both desire, and are able, to stand outside it. And we are unable even to say that all individuals *ought* to take it into account. The heirs of the Ground are many, and the "values" of some are not necessarily to be imposed on all.

#### GOD AS THE OBJECT OF RELIGION

§ 8. It is useless to talk about "a" religion of the future. There will be many religions as heretofore: faith-religions, religions of humanity, and what not. There may arise novel religions with special super-human finites as objects of worship. And a philosophical religion, also, may see the light: devotion to that supreme society in which conscious centres and Over-individuals innumerable will meet. This religion will have intellectual foundations such as have been already discussed. It will be free from that self-abasement, that degradation and servility, which shame all worshippers of a personal god. It will be above ritual and external observances. But it will rouse, withal, glowing emotions, and its value for individual and social progress will be immense. No faith-religion has an object, which, in point of sublimity and importance to ourselves, is comparable with this god-that-is-to-be. And positivist religions of "humanity," the "state," and so forth, proffer objects intolerably poor. I cannot worship undeveloped beings just because they are numerous and



gregarious. There is no "humanity," there are no "states," apart from individuals, and these individuals, viewed in a religious regard, are ridiculous rather than sublime; beings with squalid organisms and foggy minds, whose forbears, not so very long ago, could not even stand on their hind legs! A religion of "humanity" could not show me a single human being on this planet worth worship. Its real demand is that I should avow devotion to an abstraction. And it adds that a time must come, in the ageing of the planet, when the last man and, with him, the abstraction must die. I have to reject this proposed object of religion as grotesque.

#### RELIGION AND MELIORISM MUST BE COMBINED

The object of a philosophical religion must be something better than an abstraction which endures only so long as human beings, who are supposed to be mortal, think it.

We have here no gaunt abstraction in view. Our devotion is to an exalted conscious society towards which we are travelling, and which we expect finally to join. And we unite Meliorism, *i.e.* the belief that life is to become more and more worth living, with our religion. Superb vistas, we may contend, lie ahead. It may be that, in other worlds, even discrete life will be brighter; palingenesis not as now so dubious a boon; perhaps, in later stages of development, a continuous delight. But whatever may hap, in fair weather and foul, in sunshine and gloom, reality moves steadily towards the "divine event." And that event, that luminous, happy actuality, will be god—a society of individuals and Over-indi-

viduals whose possessions no longer lie apart. Life, no longer marred by "thwarting," will be fatally sweet. The *division of labour* in which god is cradled will have given place to mutually penetrative individuals, each at will fully conscious of the complementary excellences of the rest. Discrete selves will have become a divine being. In this sublime unity the panorama of our present and other as yet "unseen" worlds—the superb stream of astronomic and geologic events—the multitudinous detail of fire-mist, whirling suns and solar systems, planets with wondrous interiors and strangely varied surfaces—the romance of plant, animal, human, and superhuman history—will be caught up in one undivided divine intuition; only, however, as fragmentary phases of a life indefinitely more rich. Echoes of past suffering need not wholly disappear. Some may be wanted to the end that the divine harmony shall be thrown into relief. Others may be treasured as experiences from which the original sting has been drawn.<sup>1</sup> But memories which are merely hideous and useless will be suppressed—will be thrust back into the darkness that lies behind all conscious life.

Our task is fulfilled, an audacious venture ended. Gazing on the stream of life, we have sought to determine its source and the far ocean whither it flows. We find that individuals have risen out of the night of the GROUND. We regard deity as the consummation towards which the main flood of conscious life surely moves.<sup>2</sup> This deity neither is, nor ever will be, finally perfect and complete. Individuals are always arising, and possible future world-histories

<sup>1</sup> Ὡς ἡδὺ τοι σωθέντα μεμνησθαι πόγων.

<sup>2</sup> "Main," cf. § 7, "Will union be really universal?"

are without number. The god-who-is, however exalted his character, will rise to a higher level in the god-who-is-to-be. Philosophical religionists, withal, have an object well worthy of their devotion. For them, at least, deity may stand as the "immanent purpose," not only of this world-order, but of world-orders innumerable that have been and are yet to be. And this deity is no eternally insulated person, but an ocean of spiritual reality: an ocean which their tributary lives will actually share. They may well garland this thought with emotion, and predict for it a standing when the current theology has perished and its legends are told to children as we now tell of Hera or Phœbus. The God of philosophy is no individual among individuals. He is a unity of interpenetrative individuals, each of whom has risen out of the depths: each of whom has won his painful way through the dark places which lead to light!

. . . . .

### A FINAL DOUBT

§ 9. Having written a speculative chapter, I will conclude with a sceptical note. We have only deduced deity—we have made no attempt to verify this existence in fact.

A god-who-is-to-be could only be deduced. But we have suggested, further, that god may exist now and have come, indeed, to our particular evolution-era *mature*. And this suggestion invites the remark, To be is to be active. God must be the most active of powers. But, if so, in what ways do Nature and History, as we know them, reveal his presence?

Again, we recall the argument from Design. But there is a difficulty here which must not be overlooked. Marks of design in Nature and History may point to the agency of individual superhumans or of those minor Over-individuals whom we have discussed. They would not necessarily verify belief in the reality of a Supreme Society. The alleged unity of the "world-plan," again, will not suffice. For we agreed that there was a germinal system in the Ground. And this system, as modified by minor powers, may seem adequate to all the appearances which have to be explained.

I admit and endorse this difficulty, and I am without any present means of meeting it. God, as we have deduced him, remains hypothetical. He is such—if he exists—that his agency is hard to trace. The general benign drift of things may show it, but just when and where and how we seem unable to say. Hence scepticism is justifiable, and the final conclusion of the reader may be like mine. "I realise that an insulated life, whether of an individual or of a society, is unsatisfactory. And indeed the terrestrial individual is one-sided in such pitiful fashion that his very excellences imply grievous defects. He has his being in too petty a tract of reality. His so-called 'independent external world' exists only for him, is a cerebral phantasm; he is cut off from the main order of Nature and even from direct knowledge of those whom he holds most dear. Such a grim solitude, such insulated pettiness of experience, seems self-condemned. Any individual who has risen above the level of mankind *may* sicken of his limitations—*may* seek the life of an Over-individual which expands his own. And the Over-individual *may* sicken of



limitations too—*may* enrich itself by seeking a higher Over-individual, and so on. The wisest, most powerful, and most moral of these societies may be god. Quite so. The desire for the union *may* grow, *and reality may be such that it finds satisfaction*. But it will be well, perhaps, to emphasise the word ‘*may*.’ For example, it is not certain that *all* individuals, and far from certain that *all* Over-individuals, must sicken of their restricted lives. Such lives may have their peculiar and very attractive compensations. And we can hardly verify the statement that a majority of Over-individuals *must* come together eventually as a supreme god. There is a likelihood that this may be so, but who, by taking thought, can say more?”

Shall I urge that the most attractive compensations of a restricted life must in the long run pall? Shall I maintain that the appetitive activity native to the Real can find satisfaction only in that rich conscious life realisable in the evolution of god? Well, this would be just to repeat what has been said in other words before. And we humans, thinking within our petty circles, may have to be content to leave the matter thus. But, of course, our impotence is not decisive. All the while that we are thinking to no certain result, god, refulgent with myriad excellences, may be working in his heaven: working towards that far-off event when speculation “about” shall cease, and direct knowledge shine in its own light.













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